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LETTERS

OF THE LATE

LORD LYTTLETON,

Thomas.
Baron Lyttleton

ONLY SON OF THE VENERABLE GEORGE, LORD LYTTLETON, AND CHIEF JUSTICE IN EYRE, &c.

written

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

The First American Edition.

TO WHICH IS NOW ADDED,

A MEMOIR CONCERNING THE AUTHOR, INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF SOME EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING HIS DEATH.

TROY, N. Y.

PRINTED AND SOLD BY WRIGHT, GOODENOW, & STOCKWELL,
AT THE RENSSELAER BOOK-STORE.

1807.

LPH

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

IN presenting to the publick an edition of these elegant letters, the publishers entertain hopes of gratifying the admirers of fine writing with an American copy more correct than most of those hitherto imported, and in a dress and form at least as suitable for a gentleman's library. As the introduction to the English edition is inserted in this, they will not descant on the masterly style of these letters, the motives and manner of their publication, &c. further than to remark, that this is a work which every scholar, ambitious of acquiring the best language for writing and conversation, and every lover of belles lettres, should purchase and peruse.

But as some fastidious sectarian may deem the work too gay for Christian readers, or too profuse in free and open exposures of meretricious character for the present laxity of morals, the publishers cannot refrain from the declaration of an opposite opinion. For, when a man, surrounded with the trappings of nobility, the patronage of courts, and the dignity of office and

hereditary titles—idolized by a powerful and most respectable family—flattered and caressed by the political and literary world—placed at the head of gallantry and etiquette by the fashionable circles of his country—endowed with strong and capacious natural powers of mind, improved by a good education—graced with the manners of high life and the fascinating suavity of a courtier—sporting the equipage of a nobleman, and loaded with the treasures of a prince—and blooming in youth and vigour:—when such a man starts on the career of libertine pleasures and dissipation: and when, with all these advantages and recommendations, and with all these means of compassing his ends without fear of earthly punishment, or hindrance in his progress; he fails; he loathes the pleasures he ravished and enjoyed; he finds no lasting repose or satisfaction; he laments his irregular and licentious conduct; he declares it at all times and in all circumstances dishonourable and distressing; he envies the chaste pleasures of the virtuous and discreet; he deprecates, in pathetick terms, his own folly and wickedness; and declares, that no felicity or rewards can reach any but pure, chaste, and upright minds—when such is discovered to be the *inward* situation of this

man, who will dream of happiness in pursuits like these? Or who will imbibe a bad sentiment, or adopt an errour in principle, from so odious an example?

> *Vice* is a monster of so *frightful* mien,
> As to be *hated* needs but to be *seen*.

And thou, vain man, who sayest to thyself, "I will riot on the bounty of creation, and revel in the luxuriance of feeling and affection; I will enjoy the pleasures of youth, beauty, and sensibility, unrestrained by the shackles of civil or religious rites and institutes, unawed by the frowns of virtue, and undisturbed by the anathemas of conscience, reason, and religion"—pause for a moment, and reflect! Are thy prospects of satisfaction and delight in licentious life so bright as were young Lyttleton's? And dost thou longer think of inward peace here, or of justification hereafter? Read, then, and learn thy folly and weakness from the *confidential* language of thy pampered and ruined prototype. If thy *mind* be yet left *uncorrupt* enough to perceive *one* rhetorical beauty in his style, thy *heart* cannot be *too dull* and *insensible* to *feel the point* of the *reproof* and *warning his confessions speak.*

Troy, N. Y. June, 1807.

THE

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no species of publication which seems to be more agreeably received than that which illustrates the characters of men, distinguished for their abilities, venerable for their erudition, and admired for their virtues. The political history of great men is useful and necessary to many; but the domestick history of all men is useful and necessary to all.

Among the materials from whence the biographer forms the volume of domestick characters, private letters are considered as the most valuable, becauſe they are the most unequivocal authorities of real sentiment and opinion. Conversation is too fugitive to be remembered; publick declararations may be oftentimes suspected; but the epistolary communications of friendship may be depended upon as faithful to the mind from whence they arise. The following letters, therefore, as proceeding from a nobleman whose great talents prom-

ised no small utility to his country, and whose character has been the subject of such general speculation, will, without doubt, meet with a favourable reception.

That they were not written with the most distant idea of being offered to the world, will be evident to every reader; and, surely, no inconsiderable share of merit will be allowed them from such a circumstance. They may want, perhaps, the correctness and accuracy of prepared compositions; but they possess that easy sincerity, and that open unbosoming of sentiments, which form the charm of epistolary correspondence.

Some liberties have been taken with the letters at large, by omitting such as alluded to transactions which the world already too well knows, or which it would be shameful to betray. But no alteration has been made in any individual letter, except an occasional retrenchment of expressions, which, however common in fashionable life, or unobserved in fashionable conversation, would not justify their being condensed into print, and might give cause of offence to the scrupulous reader.

There may be also some irregularity in the disposition of the letters: the *thirteenth*, and the *last*, should have an earlier place; but they were already numerically arranged—and, as a precise order does not seem to be material, no alteration of this kind has been attempted, which, after all, must have been made upon conjecture.

As these letters were, in general, without any dates, and not one of them marked with that of the year, it was thought proper to omit them throughout. The *thirtieth* letter, which appears to have been written the last of the collection, bears, in the manuscript copy, a conjectural date of the summer of 1775. As it was a matter of particular request, it was thought prudent to suppress the names of those persons to whom these letters were addressed: though it is rather natural to suppose, that every reader, who has lived in the world, will form very probable conjectures of them, without any great exercise of thought or power of divination.

Letters

OF THE

LATE LORD LYTTLETON.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU do me great injustice: I receive your letters with the greatest pleasure; and I gave your last the usual welcome, though every line was big with reproaches to me. I feel myself greatly mortified that you should have a suspicion of any neglect on my part. When I cease to answer your addresses, you will be justified in supposing me careless about them: till then, you will, I hope, do me the justice, as far at least as relates to yourself, to think well of me. I very sensibly feel the advantage of your good opinion, and the loss of it would greatly affect me. You may be assured that my insensibility to reputation is not such as some part of my conduct may have given you reason to believe: for, after all his blustering and looking big, the heart of the worst man

cannot be at ease, when he forces a look of contempt towards the ill opinion of mankind. In spite of all his bravadoes, he is an hypocrite twelve hours out of the four-and-twenty; and hypocrisy, as it is well said, is the homage which Vice pays to Virtue—unwillingly, I confess; but still she is forced to pay it.

I will most frankly acknowledge to you, that I have been as well disposed to turn my back upon the good opinion of the world as any one in it; and that I have sometimes accomplished this important business without confusion of face, but never without confusion of heart. On a late very mortifying occasion, it was not in my power to possess myself either with one or the other. At a publick and very numerous meeting in the county where my father lives, where great part of his property lies, where his influence is considerable and his name respectable, I was not only deserted but avoided; and the women could not have discovered more horrour on my approaching them, if I had been *Tarquin* himself. I found myself alone in the crowd, and, which is as bad, alone out of the crowd. I passed the evening without company; and two or three such evenings would either have driven me to despair, or have reformed me. I was then

convinced, as I always am when I write to you, that there is some particle of good still remaining in me: but I flew from that solitary scene which gave such a conviction, to renew that dissolute intemperance which would destroy it.

It is a great misfortune, that vice, be it what it may, will find some one or other to flatter it; and that there should be assemblies of people, where, when publick and honourable society has hissed you from the stage, you may find not only reception, but applause—little earthly *pandæmoniums*, where you meet with every means to hush the pains of reflection, and to guard against the intrusions of conscience. It requires a most gigantick resolution to suffer pain, when passion quickens every sense, and every enticing object beckons to enjoyment. I was not born a Stoick, nor am I made to be a martyr! So much do I hate and detest pain, that I think all good must be dear that is to be purchased with it. Penitence is a rack, where offences have been grievous. To sit alone and court Reflection, which will come, perhaps, every moment, with a swinging sin at her back, and to be humble and patient beneath the stripes of such a scourge—by heavens, it is not in human nature to bear it! I am sure, at least, it is not in mine. If I could go to con-

fession, like a good papist, and have the score wiped off at once, *a la bonne heure!*—But to repent like a sobbing, paralytick Presbyterian, will not do for me. I am not fat enough to repent that way. *George Bodens* may be qualified for such a system of contrition; but my skinny shape will not bear mortification: and, if I were to attempt the subdual of my carnal lust by fasting and prayer, I should be soon fasted and prayed into the family vault, and disappoint the worms of their meals.

I have had, as you well know, some serious conversations with my father upon the subject; and one evening he concluded a christian lecture of a most unchristian length, by recommending me to address Heaven to have mercy upon me, and to join my prayers to his constant and paternal ones for my reformation.—These expressions, with his preceding counsels, and his affecting delivery of them, had such an effect upon me, that, like the King in Hamlet, I had bent the stubborn sinews of my knees, when it occurred to me that my devotions might be seen through the key-hole. This drew me from my pious attitude; and, having secured this aperture, so unfriendly to secret deeds, I thought it would not be an useless precaution to let down the window-cur-

tains also; and during the performance of that ceremony, some lively musick, which struck up in the street, caught my attention, and gave a sudden flirt to all my devout ideas: so I girded on my sword, and went to the Little Theatre in the Hay-market, where Mrs. *Cole* and the Reverend Dr. *Squintum* soon put me out of humour with praying, and into humour with myself.

I really began this letter in very sober seriousness; and, though I have strayed from my grave airs into something that wears a ludicrous appearance, I beg of you not to give up all hopes of my amendment. If there were but half a dozen people in the world, who would afford me the kind encouragement I receive from you, it would, I verily believe, work a reformation in the prodigal: but the world has marked me down for so much dissoluteness, as to doubt, at all times, of the sincerity of my repentance. —— has already told me, more than once, that I am got so deep into the mud as to make it highly improbable that I should ever get out; that I am too bad ever to be good; and that my future lot is either to be an open villain or an undeceiving hypocrite. Pretty encouragement truly! Lady *Huntingdon* would tell me another story: but, howev-

er that may be, I shall never give myself up for lost, while I retain a sense of your merit and a value for your friendship. With these sentiments I take my leave, and beg of you to be assured that I am most sincerely your's, &c.

LETTER II.

SO —— —— turns up his eyes, and significantly shrugs his shoulders when my name is mentioned; and, to continue the farce, pretends to lament me as a disgrace to his family! I am almost ashamed to acknowledge it, but this idle history has given me more stinging mortification than I almost ever felt. How insignificant must he become, who is openly despised by insignificance; and how loud must the hiss of the world be, when such a puny whipster insults me! If honourable men were to speak of me with contempt, I should submit without resentment; for I have deserved it. If they should bestow their pity upon me, I should thank them for giving me more than I deserve. If mankind despise, I have only to resist or fly from the contempt. But to be an object of supercilious airs, from one who, two years ago, would have wiped the dust from off my shoes, and who, perhaps, two years hence, will be proud of the same office—a puny prattler who does not possess a sufficient degree of talent or importance to give

dignity either to virtue or crime:—I say, to be the butt of such a one, severely mortifies me. Were I on the other side of the water, his back-biting looks and shrugs should be changed in a moment to well-made bows and suppliant postures. If I live, the scurvy knave shall do me homage! It really frets me, that I cannot, in four-and-twenty hours, meet him face to face, and make his subservient attentions give the lie to his humbling compassion, in the presence of those before whom he has traduced me. The day of my revenge will come, when he shall open his mouth for me to spit in it, as he was wont to do, and perform every dirty trick for which parasites were formed. His genius is to fetch and carry—a very spaniel, made to fawn and eat your leavings; whose whole courage rises no higher than to ape a snarl. If I live to outlive this snuffling pedagogue, I shall see him make a foolish end of it. Mark my words—I am a very *Shylock* —I will have Revenge!

The last word I have written puts me in mind of telling you, that —— —— has been with me for some time. The rascal, who is a priest into the bargain, carried *aqua fortis* in a syringe for three months together, to squirt the fiery liquor into the eyes of a fortunate rival.

In this diabolical design he succeeded, and the object of his malice was for ever deprived of half his sight. I have conversed with him on the horrours of this transaction; but the *Italian* finds a consolation in his own infernal feelings, and a justification in the dying command of his father, whose last words composed this emphatick sentence—"*Remember, my son, that Revenge is sweet.*"

This man is capable of any villany, if money is to be got by it; and I doubt not but he might be bribed to undertake, without hesitation, robbery, seduction, rape, and murder. However, my superiour virtue for once overawed his villany: for he most certainly had it in his power to have robbed me of a large sum of money, without the possibility of a discovery; and, if he thought it necessary, he might have dispatched me with as little danger. I have since asked him what strange fit of virtue, or fear of the devil, came across him, when he had such an opportunity to make his fortune. The impudent rascal replied, at once, that he had very powerful suggestions to send me to the other world; and that, if, fortunately for him, I had possessed one single virtue, he should, without ceremony, have dispatched me to my reward. This event, I think, will make

a complete Mandivillean of me. You see, for your encouragement, that a bad life is good for something; and for the good example which the world will receive from me in times to come, it will be indebted to the very bad one I have already given it.—After this signal and providential preservation, I cannot but think that Heaven has something particularly great in store for me.

As I tell it you, this history has the air of a *badinage;* but you may be assured that it is a real fact, and I am sorry that the circumstances of it are too long and various to be inserted in a letter. I believe you know something of the man; but, if you repeat what I have written to any one who is acquainted with him, you will soon find that I have had a very narrow escape. I have bribed him to leave me, and he is gone for *England.* The story of *Lewis the Fourteenth* and his Barber is well known; and you may, if you please, apply it to

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter, which I received no longer ago than yesterday, would do honour to the most celebrated name among the moral writers of any period. It is the most sensible, easy, and concise history of the Passions I have ever read. Indeed, it has not been my lot to have given any great portion of my time to such studies. These powers have kept me too much in the sphere of their own tumultuous whirlwinds, to leave me the leisure of examining them. I have been, am, and I fear shall be, their sport and their slave; and when I shall acquire that serenity of character which will enable me to examine them with a philosophical scrutiny, I cannot tell. My expectations are at such a distance upon this point, that I am almost ashamed to mention my apprehensions to you. It is, however, treating you with that confidence you deserve, to tell you, that from my soul I think the very source of them must be dried up before they will lose

their empire over me. In the lively expression of the poet, "they are the elements of life," without which man would be a mass of insensible and unintelligent matter. Now, it is that happy compound of these elementary particles of intellectual life, that you so well describe, so thoroughly understand, and so happily possess, which I despair of attaining. I have the resolution to make resolutions, but it extends no farther; I cannot keep them: and to escape from the misery brought on by one passion, I have so habituated myself to bathe in a branch of the same flood, that I cannot look for any other relief.—You very naturally ask me where all this must end?—I know not!—and to similar interrogatories I have sometimes madly replied, I care not!—But I shall not offend you with such a declation; and when I am writing to you, I do not feel myself disposed to do it. In answering you, therefore, I shall adopt the language of the ruined gamester, who addressed his shadow in the glass: "*Je vous ai dit et redit, Malheureux! que, si vous continuiez a faire de pareils tour, vous iriez a l'hopital.*"

You lay great stress upon the powers of Reason, and, in truly philosophical language, heightened by the most proper and affecting

imagery, present this sage directress of weak mortals to my attention. I receive her at your hand, respect her as your friend, and venerate her as the cause of your superiority over me: but whether she perceives that my respect is insincere, or remembers how shamefully I have neglected her; so it is, that she slides insensibly from me, and I see her no more.—My bark rides steady for a moment, but it is not long ere it again becomes the sport of winds and billows. But, after all, and without any blasphemous arraignment of the order of Providence, permit me to ask you—Why is this principle, implanted in our natures for the wise and happy regulation of them, so weak in itself, so slow in its progress, and so late in its maturity? If it is designed to controul our Passions, why does it not keep pace with them?—wherefore does it not *grow with their growth*, and *strengthen with their strength*?—and what cause can be assigned that the one are ripe for gratification before the other has scarce bursted into blossom? Let us, however, take a long stride from the imbecility of youth to the firmness of mature age, and we shall see that the Passions have only changed their form; that Reason still totters, is frequently driven from her throne, and even de-

serts those, who have most cultivated her friendship, and acknowledged her power. The contest frequently continues through life, and the superiority as often ends, where it always begins, on the side of Passion. We may be said even sometimes to outlive Reason; while Passion of some kind, and, many times, of the worst kind, will preserve its influence to the last. To conclude the matter, how often does the lamp of human reason become extinct, yielding corporal nature a prey to Passion in the extreme, whose tortures are rendered more fierce by the iron restraints of necessary policy and medical interposition!

If it were possible to trace the course of Reason in the mind of the best man that ever lived, from its first budding to a fulness of maturity, what a mortifying scene would be unveiled! What checks and delays, what tranquillity and tumult, what frequent extinction and renovation, what rapid flights and sudden downfals, what contest and submission, would compose the operations of this rightful mistress of human actions! Men of cold tempers, and habituated to reflection, may cry up this distinctive faculty of man; they may chaunt its apotheosis, and build temples to its honour:—such were Lord Shaftesbury and Mr. Addi-

son; and they may be joined by those, whose fortunate education and early connections have given to their warmer dispositions the best objects. In that confined but happy society I must place my friend, whose kind star preserved his youth from temptation, and blest his bloom of manhood with the ample and all-satisfying pleasures of virtuous love. You will not suspect me of wishing to diminish the reality of that merit which I so much admire, or of a desire to damp the glow of that virtue whose lustre cannot be diminished by my envy, or heightened by my praise; but, in the course of human affairs, time and chance have so much to do, that I cannot suppose even your worth to be without some obligations to them.

To conclude this very, very long letter, I must beg leave to observe, that I do not understand why *Reason*, that divinity of philosophers, should be cooped up in the confined region of the brain, while the Passions are permitted to range at large, and without restraint, through every other part of the body. I see you smile—but be assured that these two jarring powers are, for a moment, both united in me, to assure you that I am, with a real sincerity,

Your's, &c.

LETTER IV.

I AVAIL myself, Madam, of the very obliging offer you made me of suffering a small parcel to occupy an useless pocket in your coach. It is of some little importance; but if the Custom-house officers at *Dover* should suspect you of being a smuggler of lace, as you certainly are of other and better things, and insist upon examining its contents, I beg you will indulge their curiosity without ceremony. On your arrival in *London*, when any of your servants should be unemployed, I must desire the additional favour of its being sent to the place where it is addressed.

I feel myself extremely mortified, that a cold, which forbids me to utter any thing more than a whisper, should have prevented me from offering you my personal wishes for your health and happiness, an agreeable journey, and a safe arrival in England, where your friends will feel a delight in seeing you, which can be only equalled by their regret whom you have left behind. Among the number of them I am

not the least sincere; and, tho' I found your gates but very seldom open for me, I am truly grateful to you for the pleasure I received whenever you indulged me with the honour of an admittance.

Perhaps your caution, in this particular, proceeded from an ill opinion of me: you might consider me as a person too dangerous to break with openly, or too intruding to trust with familiarity. If so, you have done me wrong, and, what is more, you have done injustice to yourself. There is a dignity in virtue like your's, which commands respect from all; and the worst of men would be overawed in his approaches to it. Perhaps, Madam, there was also a little compassion mingled with your reserve. You must be conscious of your charms; but, possessed of an heart which would find no glory in coquettish triumphs, you did not suffer me to approach you, lest I should be scorched by the beams of that beauty, which is sufficient to inflame all, and which you preserve for one. If such humane considerations governed the orders which were given to your *Swiss*, it becomes me to express my grateful sense of your kindness: but, if you acted from motives not so favourable to

me, I must lament, as a tenfold misfortune, that you should add another thong to the scourge of Injustice.

I believe in my heart, that your society, and such as I should have met with you, would have been of great use and benefit to me; and that, in being so sparing of your welcomes, you omitted doing a great good. The very business of this letter has made a gloomy mind less gloomy; and, if I had half a dozen letters to write to half a dozen persons like yourself, (if so many could be found in the world,) it would make this day, in spite of every unpleasant indisposition, one of the happiest and best of my life. During the future part of it, what of good or honour is destined for me, I cannot tell; but I shall ever consider it as a very great and most flattering privilege, whenever you will permit me, in any manner, to assure you with what real respect

I am, &c. &c.

LETTER V.

OF all the birds in the air, who should have been here but —— ——! I met her in the ——, where she could not well avoid me, though I saw in her looks a wish to do it. She received me, therefore, with great politeness; conversed with much ease and vivacity during the walk; and, when I requested permission to wait on her, she granted it, in that sort of manner, which told me, in as strong terms as looks could give, "You are very im-"prudent *to risk such* a request: but as an "absolute refusal might raise conjectures in "those about us unfavourable to you, I will "not answer you with a denial; and my gates "shall not always be shut against you. But "you will do well to proportion your visits to "what you may naturally conceive to be my "desire." And she has kept her word. During six weeks that she was here, I called ten times, and was admitted only thrice, when there was a great deal of company. This is a very superiour woman; for, while she con-

ducts herself in such a manner to me, as to tell me plainly that the respect she has for my family is the only inducement to give me the reception she does; there is not a single look suffered to escape her, from which any person might form the most distant suspicion of her sentiments concerning me. It is my blab of a conscience that does the business for me—it is that keen-sighted lynx, which sees things impervious to every other eye: and thus I expose myself to myself, when I appear without spot or blemish to the circle about me.

—— —— is a very fine woman, a very sensible woman, and, what is more rare, a very rational woman. The three qualities of beauty, talents, and wisdom, which are generally supposed to be incompatible in the same female character, are, however, united in her. There is another circumstance which, though a rake, I cannot but admire, and which the most dissolute respect in others, though they are strangers to it themselves—I mean constancy. From the united principles of duty and affection, she is faithful to her husband, who, to say the truth, highly deserves it.—Such a woman is capable of making the bad good, the inconstant stable, and the giddy wise; and he, who would wish to see what is

most perfect and respectable in the female character, would do well to make a pilgrimage to see and converse with her. I was so very much afflicted with a cold, as not to be able to go and hand her to the coach on her departure; which was a circumstance still more afflicting than the cold: so I consoled myself by writing her a letter, which was half serious, more than half gallant, and almost sincere.

If you could, by any means, discover—and I should think it would be in your power to do it without much trouble—whether she has at any time mentioned it, and, if so, in what manner she expressed herself, you would very sensibly gratify the curiosity of,

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER VI.

IT is so long since I received your letter, that I am almost ashamed to answer it; and be assured, that, in writing my apology, and asking your pardon, I act with a degree of resolution that I have seldom experienced. I hardly expect that you will receive the one or grant the other: I do not deserve either, or indeed any kindness from you of any sort; for I have been very ungrateful. I am myself very sensible of it, and very much apprehend that you will be of the same opinion. I was never more conscious of my follies than at this moment: and, if you should have withdrawn yourself from the very few friends which are left me, I shall not dare to complain; for I deserve the loss, and can only lament that another and a deeper shade will be added to my life. The very idea of such a misfortune is most grievous; and nothing can be more painful than the reflection of suffering it from a fatal, ill-starred, and abortive infatuation, which will prove my bane. I have written letters, since I received

your's, to many who have never done me any kindness; to some who have betrayed me; and to others whose correspondence administered no one comfort to my heart, or honour to my character; and for them, at least engaged with them, I have neglected you, to whose disinterested friendship I am so much indebted, and which is now become the only point whereon to fix my anchor of hope.

But this is not all: if it were, I have something within me which would whisper your forgiveness; for you know of what frail materials I am made, and have ventured, in the face of the world's malice, to prognostinate favourably of my riper life. But I fear that you will think meanness added to ingratitude, when I tell you, that I am called back to acknowledge your past goodness to me, and to ask a repetition of it, not from any renewed sentiments of honour or gratitude, but by immediate and wringing distress. In such a situation your idea presented itself to me—an idea which was not encouraged in seasons of enjoyment: it never wished to share my pleasure, but, like the first-born of friendship, it hastened to partake my pain. Though it came in so lovely a form, I dared not bid it welcome; and I started, as at the sight of one

whom I had severely injured, whose neglect, contempt, and revenge, I might justly dread, while I did not possess the least means of resistance, nor had a covert left where I might fly for refuge!

This is a very painful confession, and will, I hope, plead my cause in your bosom, and win you to grant my request. I have written to ——— for some time past, and have never been favoured with one line of reply. Indeed, it has been hinted, that he refuses to read my letters. However that may be, he most certainly does not answer them. In order, therefore, that I may know my fate and be certain of my doom, I most earnestly and submissively intreat you to deliver the inclosed letter into his hands.——If I should be deserted by you both, the consequences may be of such a nature, as, in the most angry paroxysm, you would neither of you wish to

Your most obliged, &c.

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR ——,

I RETURN you all my thanks for the endeavours you have made to satisfy the wishes of my last letter. I am very grateful to you, though they have proved fruitless. I suppose she destroyed the paper the moment she had perused the contents of it. Perhaps she did not even deign to read it, but delivered it immediately to the flames, as tainted and infectious in coming from so unholy a person as I am. The idea mortifies me. To be treated with contempt is always painful, and more so to those who deserve it, as they have no shelter in themselves to which they can fly for protection: in their own hearts they will find the echo of those sounds against which they shut their ears; while the good man possesses a shield in his virtue, and returns compassion for injustice. Contempt becomes still more poignant, when it is conducted with a delicacy which does not give you the most momentary opportunity of returning it; when it is so blend-

ed with good-humour and external decorum as to let no one see it but the conscious victim.

In this manner did the fair Lady manage the matter with me: she honoured me with every mark of exteriour respect; she suffered no polite attention or civility to escape her; at the same time, her conduct towards me was so general and equally tempered, that she won me, as it were by enchantment, into the same mode, and precluded familiarity. I had indeed brought myself to the resolution of making my approaches more nearly, when she immediately discovered my design, and, by asking some questions about my father, which were wholly unexpected on my part, and connected with some very stinging ideas, she threw me at once to my former distance, dissipated in a moment the impudence I had collected for the occasion, and I have never seen her since.

You have some sportable fancies upon the subject, and you are welcome to them: but for once you are beside the mark; and, though your incredulity may oppose itself to my assertion, believe me that I have an honest respect for this woman, and it is on that account that I am so severely wounded by her treatment of me. The contempt of half mankind is not worth the smile it occasions: they act from ca-

price, folly, weakness, envy, or some base motive; they join the vulgar clamour they know not why; and their hiss, though loud, gives not the pain of a moment: but the scorn of good and honourable men is the fruit of conviction; it springs from an aversion to what is contrary to their own excellence, and cannot be retorted. There is no other way of being revenged of them, but in giving the lie to their unfavourable prognostications, by an immediate and complete reformation; and this is a difficulty, my friend, of whose arduous nature you are equally sensible with myself.—*Facilis descensus Averni—sed revocare gradum*, &c. &c. &c.——The road by contrition to amendment is humiliating, painful, and difficult; and the greater part of guilty mortals adopt the sentiments of *Macbeth:*

——————"I am in blood
Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as bad as to go o'er."

But to the purpose: I have another commission for you, in which I flatter myself you will be more successful than in your last. You must know, then, I am in a bad plight, and there is no good ground of expectation that matters will go better with me: on the contrary, the prospect is a dark one, and the gloom increases every step I take. To extricate my-

self, if possible, I wrote to ———, who has not answered my letters, and, I am disposed to think, never opens them. I was, therefore, under the necessity of addressing a very pitiful, penitential epistle to ——. I have used him scurvily, and made such an ill return to all his zeal to serve me, that I have too much reason to apprehend his resentment. He passed through —— about six weeks ago, without inquiring after me. However, without appearing to know any thing of that circumstance, I ventured to tell a miserable tale to him, and to beseech his kindness would once more interest itself in my behalf, by delivering a letter into —— ——'s own hands. It would be an easy matter, I should imagine, to discover if he has complied with my request. T—— —— will inform you if he has been lately, and when, in —— street. Perhaps he may have scented out something more; and whatever you can discover, I should be glad to know with all possible dispatch. They will, probably, be slow in their operations, whatever they may be; and your information will direct my hopes, or confirm my fears—will either give a sunshine to the present shade, or prepare me for the worst. Adieu, and believe me

Ever your's, &c.

LETTER VIII.

YOU accuse me of neglect in not informing you that I was in London. Believe me, I had every disposition in the world to do it, but was opposed by circumstances, which, among other mortifications, prevented me from seeing you. I came to *England* in so private a manner, that I imagined no one would, or, indeed, could know of my arrival; but, by a combination of unlucky circumstances, the secret was discovered, and by those who were the most likely to make a very unpleasant use of their knowledge. I was therefore obliged to shift my plan, and to beg H—— —— to give me an asylum in his house, where he very kindly received and entertained me. My abode was not suspected by any one; and I remained there till certain people were persuaded that I had never left the Continent, or was again returned to it; and till the hell-hounds, who were in pursuit of me, had relaxed their search.

You must, certainly, have heard me mention something of my Host and Hostess:

they are the most original couple that ever were paired together; and their singularity effected what, I believe, no other amusement could have attained—it made me forget the disagreeableness of my situation. He possesses a strange, wild, rhapsodick genius, which, however, is not uncultivated; and, amid a thousand odd, whimsical ideas, he produces original bursts of poetry and understanding that are charming. She is a foreigner, assumes the title of Countess, and, without knowing how to write or read, possesses, in the circumstance of dress, behaviour, &c. all her husband's dispositions. She is fantastick, grotesque, outree, and wild; nevertheless, at times, there are very pleasing gleams of propriety in her manners and appearance.

I cannot describe so well as you may conceive the striking and odd contrast of these two characters: and what strange sparks are produced by the collision of them. When she imagines that Cytherea acknowledges her divinity, and he grasps in his hand the lyre of Apollo; when the goddess unfolds herself to view with imaginary millions at her feet, and when the god chides the chairs and tables for not being awakened into a cotillion by his

strains; in short, when the sublime fit of madness is on, it is an august scene: but if the divinities should rival each other, heaven changes instantly to hell, Venus becomes a trull, and Phœbus a blind fiddler. It is impossible to describe the riot; not only reflections, but things of a more solid nature are thrown at each other. Homer's genius is absolutely necessary to paint celestial combats. But it ends not here: the superb opera, which was acted, at least, during my stay, three times a week, and rehearsed generally every day, for the most part, has an happy conclusion. The contest requires the support of nectar, which softens the edge of resentment, puts the parties in good humour, and they are soon disposed to acknowledge each other's merit and station, with a zeal and fondness superiour, if possible, to their late rage and opposition. A number of collateral circumstances serve as interludes to the grand piece, and, though less sublime, are not less entertaining.

You will now, probably be no longer displeased with me for making my hiding-place a secret. One hour's attendance upon our orgies would have done for you; on the contrary, they suited me. I wanted something

to hurry my spirits, to dissipate my thoughts, and amuse my mind; and I found it in this retreat. You know enough of the parties to enter into my description. I hope it will make you laugh; but, if my pen should fail, I will promise to make your sides ach when we meet again—a pleasure which I look to with a most sensible impatience. I remain,

Your's most truly, &c.

LETTER IX.

SINCE the little snatch of pleasure I enjoyed with you, I have been again obliged to make my retreat: I had made good my ground, in my own opinion, but the devil that is in me would not suffer me to maintain it. There is a proverb of *Zoroaster* to the following effect—"That there are an hundred opportunities of "doing ill every day, but that of doing well "comes only once a year." There is some wit and much truth in the observation. The wise man was led to make it, I suppose, from the circumstances of the times wherein he lived; and, if it had been his lot to breathe in these latter days, he would be equally justified in forming and applying such an opinion; and, perhaps, in every intervening period. Indeed, if I may judge from my own experience, matters are still growing worse; for I never fail to find the *daily* opportunities, but the *annual* one has ever escaped me.

There is nothing so miserable, and, I may add, so unfortunate, as to have nothing to do!

The peripatetick principle, that Nature abhors a *vacuum*, may be applied, with great propriety, to the human intellect, which will embrace any thing, however criminal, rather than be without an object. It is a matter of indubitable certainty with me, that, if I had kept my seat in Parliament, most of the unpleasant predicaments in which I have been involved since that time would have been avoided. I was disposed to application in the political line, and was possessed of that ready faculty of speech which would have enabled me to make some little figure in the senate. I should have had employment; my passions would have been influenced by a proper, animating object, and my vanity would have been sufficiently satisfied. During the short time I sat in Parliament, I found myself in the situation I have described: I was pleased with the character; I availed myself of its privileges while I possessed them; I mingled in publick debate, and received the most flattering testimonies of applause. If this scene had continued, it would have been very fortunate for myself, and have saved my friends great anxiety and many alarms: you, among the rest, would have been spared the pain of much unavailing counsel and disregarded admonition.

You know me well enough to be certain that I must have a particular and not a common object to employ my attention: it must be an object which inspires desire, calls forth activity, keeps hope upon the stretch, and has some sort of high colouring about it. Power and popular reputation are of this kind, and would greatly have engrossed my thoughts and wishes; they would have kept under the baser passions: I should have governed them at least, and my slavery, if I was destined to be a slave, would have been more honourable. But, losing a situation so suitable to me, I fell back a prey to that influence which had already proved so fatal, and yielded myself a victim to an habitual dissoluteness which formed my only pleasure.

I do not mean to write a disrespectable thought of my father; I would not offend you by doing it; but, surely, his ignorance of mankind is beyond all conception. It is hardly credible that a man of his understanding and knowledge, whose life has been ever in the world and the most polished societies of it, who writes well and ably on its manners, should be so childish in its concerns as to deserve the coral that amused and the go-cart that sustained him sixty years ago. I write in

confidence; and you know what I assert to be true. Indeed, I might go further, and trace the errours of my own life from the want of that kind of paternal discernment which sees into the character of his child, watches over its growing dispositions, gently moulds them to his will, and completes the whole by placing him in a situation suitable to him.

I have been the victim of vanity; and the sacrifice of me was begun before I could form a judgment of the passion. You will, probably, understand me; but, if there should be the least gloom in my allusions, I will, with your leave, explain the matter more clearly in some future letter. There is a great deal of difference between a good man and a good father: I have known bad men who excelled my father as much in parental care as he was superiour to them in real virtue.—But more of this hereafter. In the mean time, and at all times,

I am, &c.

LETTER X.

YOU have, certainly, given yourself very unjustifiable airs upon my subject: neither your talents, knowledge, figure, courage, or virtue afford you the shadow of that superiority over me, which, I understand, you affect to maintain. However imprudent or bad my conduct may have been, whatever vices I may unfortunately possess, be assured I do not envy you your sniveling virtues, which are worse than the worst of vices, and give an example of meanness and hypocrisy in the extreme.—Your letter is a *farrago* of them both; and since the receipt of it I despise you more than ever.

What, Sir! has my father got a cough, or does he look thinner than usual and read his Bible? There must be some certain symptom of his decay and dissolution that could induce you to address yourself so kindly to one, who, to use your own expression, is, as he ought to be, abandoned by his family. You have dreamed of an hatchment upon —— house, and

seen a visionary coronet suspended over my brow. You are a simpleton and a parasite to let such weak reasons guide you to wag your tail and play the spaniel, and renew your offers to fetch and carry. Be assured, for your comfort, that, if ever you and I have any future intercourse together, it will be upon such terms, or worse.

I have heard it said, and I believe it to be true, that you pretend to lament your poor ——'s fate, and, with a more than rueful visage, prognosticate the breaking of his heart from the wicked life of his graceless son. Now, I will tell you a secret, that, supposing such a canting prophecy should take place to-morrow, you would be the first to flatter the *parricide*. I consider you with a mixture of scorn and pity, when I see you so continually hampered in difficulties from your regard to the present and future Lord: though you order your matters tolerably well; for there is not one of our family to whom your hypocritical canting will not answer in some measure, but to myself. I know you, and I declare you to be incapable of any love or affection to any one, even to a mother or a sister. You know what I mean: but, to quit an idea abhorrent to human nature, let me intreat you, if it is in

your power, to act with candour; and, if you must speak of me, tell your sentiments openly, and not with those covert looks and affected shrugs, which convey so much more than meets the ear—and be so good, I pray you, as to raise your merit upon your own mighty stock of virtues, and not upon my vices. The world will one day judge between us, and I must desire you to be content with the acknowledged superiority you will receive from the arbitration in your favour.

Oh, stultum nimis est, cum tu pravissima tentes,
Alterius censor ut vitiosa notes!

I have not yet sung a requiem to my own honour; and, though you and some others of my good friends may have chaunted a dirge over the grave you have yourselves dug for it, it does not rest without the hopes of a joyful and speedy resurrection. To have done with you for the present, I have only to desire you to be an open enemy to me, or a real friend, if you are capable of either: the halting between two opinions on the matter is both disgraceful and contemptible. Be assured that I give you these counsels more for your own sake, than for that of

Your humble servant, &c.

LETTER XI.

MY DEAR SIR;

YOU wish that I should explain myself at large with respect to that vanity, which I accuse of having been the cause of every inconvenience and misdoing of my past life, to which I owe the disagreeable circumstances of my present situation and shall be indebted, probably, for some future events which, I fear, are in store for me.

You will, I believe, agree with me, that vanity is the foible of my family: every individual has a share of it for himself and for the rest; they are all equally vain of themselves, and of one another. It is not, however, an unamiable vanity: it makes them happy, though it may sometimes render them ridiculous; and it never did an injury to any one but to me. I have every reason to load it with execration, and to curse the hour when this passion was concentrated to myself.

Being the only boy and hopes of the fami-

ly, and having such an hereditary and collateral right to genius, talents, and virtue, (for this was the language held by certain persons at that time,) my earliest prattle was the subject of continual admiration. As I encreased in years, I was encouraged in boldness, which partial fancy called manly confidence; while sallies of impertinence, for which I should have been scourged, were fondly considered as marks of an astonishing prematurity of abilities. As it happened, Nature had not been a niggard to me; it is true she has given me talents, but accompanied them with dispositions which demanded no common repressure and restraint, instead of liberty and encouragement: but this vanity had blinded the eyes not only of my relations, but also of their intimate connections; and, I suppose, such an hot-bed of flattery was never before used to spoil a mind, and to choak it with bad qualities, as was applied to mine. The late Lord Bath, Mrs. ———, and many others have been guilty of administering fuel to the flame, and joined in the family incense to such an idol as myself. Thus was I nursed into a very early state of audacity; and being able, almost at all times, to get the laugh against a father, or an uncle, &c. I was not backward in giving

such impertinent specimens of my ability.—This is the history of that impudence which has been my bane, gave to my excesses such peculiar accompaniments, and caused those, who would not have hesitated to commit the offence, loudly to condemn the mode of its commission in me.

When I drew towards manhood, it will be sufficient to say, that I began to have some glimmering of the family weakness: however, I was still young; dependence was a considerable restraint; and I had not acquired that subsequent knowledge of the world which changed my notions of paternal authority. I was, therefore, without much difficulty, brought to consent to the design of giving solidity to my character, and preserving me from publick contagion, by marriage. A rich and amiable young lady was chosen to the happy and honourable task of securing so much virtue as mine, to correct the natural exuberance of youthful inexperience, and to shape me into that perfection of character which was to verify the dreams of my visionary relations.

I must own that the lady was both amiable and handsome, but cold as an anchorite; and, though formed to be the best wife in the world to a good husband, was by no means calcu-

lated to reclaim a bad one. But, to complete the sensible and well-digested plan in which so many wise heads were concerned, it was determined for me to make the tour of Europe, previous to my marriage, in order to perfectionate my matrimonial qualifications; and the lovely idea of the fair maid I left behind, was presented to me, as possessing a talismanick power to preserve me from seduction. But this was not all: for the better enabling me to make a proper and becoming appearance, or, in other words, to give me every means of gratification, the family purse was lavishly held forth; I was left almost without controul in point of expense, and every method pursued to make me return the very reverse of what expectation had painted me. You know as well as myself what happened during my travels, as well as after my return; and I trust that you will impute my misconduct, in part, at least, to its primary cause.

In this short sketch of the matter, which consists rather of hints than descriptions, you will see the drift of my reasoning, and know how to apply it to a thousand circumstances in your remembrance. You were present at my being received into the arms of my family with a degree of warmth, delight, and triumph,

which the brightest virtue could alone have deserved; and you recollect the cause of all this rapturous forgiveness, which, I believe, penitence itself would not, at that time, have effected: it was my having made a speech in Parliament, flowery, indeed, and bold, but very little to the purpose; and, at a time when, as I was certain that I should lose my seat, it would have been prudent in me to have remained silent—however, Mr. Ellis thought proper to compliment me upon the occasion, and to observe that I spoke with hereditary abilities; and this circumstance instantly occasioned the short-lived family truce that succeeded.

That my relations may have cause to complain of me, I do not deny; but this confession is accompanied with an opinion, in which, I doubt not of your acquiescence, that I, on my side also, have no small cause of complaint: and, however black the colour of my future life may be, I shall ever consider that the dusky scenes of it are occasioned by the vanity of my family, and not by any obdurate or inflexible dispositions inherent in my own character. I am, with great regard,

Your's, &c.

LETTER XII.

MY DEAR ———,

IF you had been at all explicit with me about the *Arabian Courser*, he should, most certainly, have been at your service. Notwithstanding he was the gift of *Hymen*, to whom I have so few obligations, the animal was a favourite, and I brought him to the continent with me, where he was very troublesome and very useless. But he troubles me no more; and a little ridiculous event, which happened a few weeks ago, made me hate and detest him. If there had been any laughers, the laugh would have been very much against me on the occasion: as it was, I felt and looked so foolish, that I never afterwards could turn a favourable eye upon the beast that was the cause of my mortification.

I shall not give you an account of this little history; for, as I am the principal hero of it, I shall not tell it well: so I resign the task to P——. When you see him, therefore, ques-

tion him upon the subject, and he will do it justice. He is a most lively, good-humoured, and pleasant man, who bears the ills of life as if they were blessings, and seems to take the rough and the smooth with an equal countenance. This sort of unbended philosophy is the best gift that Nature can bestow on her children; it lightens the burden of care, and turns every sable and ghastly hue of melancholy to bright and splendid colours. There is no one I envy so much as I do P——: a cap and bells is a crown to him; a tune upon a flageolet is a concert—if the sun shines, he sports himself in its beams; if the storm comes, he skips gayly along, and when he is wet to the skin, it only serves to make out a pleasant story while he is drying himself at the fire. If you are dull after dinner, he will get him up and rehearse half a dozen scenes out of a play, and do it well, and be as pleased with his performance as you can be. With all these companionable talents, he is neither forward, noisy, or impertinent; but, on the contrary, very conversable, and possesses as pleasant a kind of good-breeding as any one I ever knew.

His company has been a great relief to me, and I recommend you to cultivate his acquaintance as an entertaining and agreeable compan-

ion. You and I, my dear friend, are differently, and, I must add, less happily framed. We are hurried about by every gust and whirlwind of passion; and, though hope does throw a pale gilding upon our disappointments, fear never fails to interrupt our pleasures.—I would give more than half of what I shall ever be worth, to be blessed with a moiety of P——'s temper and disposition.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I BEG your pardon, and plead guilty to the crime laid to my charge! The Dialogues, which you have seen, were written by me, on hints given me by an infidel Frenchman at *Turin*.* That it was a folly, to say no worse, to amuse myself with such compositions, I readily acknowledge; nor am I less disposed to own that it was the weakest of all vanities to disperse any copies of them. Your suspicion of their having been composed in an evil hour, as a ridicule upon those which have been published by my father, is a natural one; but, believe me, it is not founded in fact. Bad as they may be, they were not writ for so bad a purpose; and, if I had considered the possibility of such an idea becoming prevalent, they would never have been exposed to any inspec-

* These Dialogues are too irreverent and profane to justify a publication. The personages of the first are the *Saviour of the World* and *Socrates*; and of the second, *King David* and *Cæsar Borgia*.

tion. I wrote them originally in French, and never, to my recollection, gave them an English dress, but when I read them accidentally to some one who did not understand the former language. I was flattered into the suffering of some copies to be taken by the declaration of a respectable literary company, that they were superiour to Voltaire's Tragedy of *Saul*; and these copies must have been greatly multiplied to have made it possible that one of them should have reached you. I am very sorry for it; for you have already more than sufficient reason to fill your letters to me with reproaches; and I curse the chance that has thrown another motive in your way to continue a train so disagreeable to us both.

It is true that my father is a Christian, and has given an ample testimony of his faith to the world by his writings: but it was long after he attained to my age that he became a convert to that system which he has defended. It is painful in me, and hardly fair in you, to occasion our being brought together in the same period: it takes from me the means of justification where I could use them, and of palliation where a complete defence might not be practicable.—As to my Right Reverend uncle, I shall consider him with less ceremony.

He also may be a good Christian; but I recollect to have heard him make a better discourse upon the *outside* ornaments of an old Gothick pulpit, I think it was at *Wolverhampton*, than he ever delivered *in* one, throughout the whole course of his evangelical labours. He seems much more at home in a little harangue on some doubtful remnant of a Saxon tomb-stone, than in urging the performance of Christian duties, or guarding, with his lay-brother, the Christian fortress against infidel invasion. I well remember also to have heard his Right Reverence declare, that he would willingly give one of his fingers, (that was his expression,) to have a good natural history of *Worcestershire*. What holy ardour he may possess as an *Antiquarian* I cannot tell; but, in my conscience, I think he would make a sorry figure as a *Christian Martyr*, and that a zeal for our holy religion would not enflame him to risk the losing of a nail from his finger.

I repeat to you, upon my honour, that I did not wish these *jeux d'esprit* should have gone beyond the limits I had prescribed for them. The very few persons to whom I gave them, were bound, by a very solemn promise, not to circulate their contents, or to name their

author. If they have forfeited their word, I am sorry for it; but the failure of their engagement cannot be imputed to me, and the severest judge would not think me guilty of more than *chance-medley* on the occasion. In your breast, I hope, there is a complete and full acquittal for

Your most sincere and obliged, &c.

LETTER XIV.

MY DEAR ———,

I CANNOT bring it within the compass of my belief, that H— — has escaped your recollection: however, I shall be able to restore it to its proper tone in a moment, by mentioning an ode addressed by him to me on the subject of gaming. You admired it too much to have forgot the author; and it now occurs to me, that you, or some one in the company, rehearsed on the occasion a long string of laughable Eton and Oxford anecdotes concerning him: nay, the very last time we were together, you sarcastically repeated to me some of his vaticinations on my impetuous attachment to play, and kindly foretold the completion of them. After all, I believe you are either laughing at me, or pretending ignorance of my bard, in order to have an hash of the same dish, which you are pleased to say delighted you so much in my last letter.

Was it not you (or do I dream) who was so charmed with that part of his poem where he describes my being so reduced by gaming as to be abliged to sell H— —, and supposes the estate to be bought by the descendant of some felon who was reprieved from death to transportation by my ancestor *the Judge*, whose picture he tears down from the wall, as a sight disgusting to him? I am not certain as to the correctness of my recollection, but the lines are, I believe, to the following effect:

> Shall some unfeeling stranger reign
> Within that blest domain?
> Some convict's spawn, by thy forefather's breath,
> Perchance, reprieved from death?
> Whilst thou, self-banished, self-enslaved, shalt roam,
> Without a friend or home!
> —Still shall he tremble at the Judge's frown,
> And, fraught with spite, tear down,
> From the repining wall, his venerable shade, &c.

It is a composition of great merit; and, if he was so fortunate as to possess a sense of harmony, he would almost put an end to the present vacation of poetry and poets. His thoughts are original, bold, and nervous; his images apt, lively, and beautiful; his language is never puerile, but sometimes low, and sometimes inflated. If his taste was improved, and he had an ear for versification, which I think he has not, his compositions would be delightful,

and, as I have already observed, place him in the first rank of modern poets. P——s, I believe, sometimes visits him, and will most willingly present you *a Monsieur* and *Madame*, if you make known your wishes to him.—A letter from me would shut his door against you: my former favour was never equal to my present disgrace; and if you wish to be well in that quarter, you must not acknowledge the least regard for me. Indeed, you would do well never to mention the name of

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER XV.

AND I awoke, and behold I was a Lord! It was no unpleasant transition, you will readily believe, from infernal dreams and an uneasy pillow, from insignificance and dereliction, to be a Peer of Great Britain, with all the privileges attendant upon that character, and some little estate into the bargain. My sensations are very different from any I have experienced for some time past. My consequence, both internal and external, is already greatly elevated; and the *empressment* of the people about me is so suddenly encreased as to be ridiculous. By heavens! my dear — —, we are a very contemptible set of beings; and so on.

Without meaning any thing so detestable as a pun, I shall certainly *lord* it over a few of those who have looked disdain at me. My coronet shall glitter scorn at them, and insult their low souls to the extreme of mortifica-

tion. I have received a letter from — —, that dirty parasite, full of condolence and congratulation, with a *my Lord* in every line, and *your Lordship* in every period. I will make the rascal lick the dust; and, when he has flattered me till his tongue is parched with lies, I will upbraid him with his treason, and turn my back upon him for ever. There are a score of bugs, or more, of the same character, whom the beams of my prosperity will warm into servility, and whose names will be left at my door before I have been ten days in town; but may eternal ignominy overtake me, if I do not make the tenderest vein in their hearts ach with my reproach! Whether the world will be converted into respect towards me, I do not pretend to determine; its anger will, at all events, be softened: but, be that as it may, I can look it in the face with less fear than I was wont to do, and make it smile upon my political career, though it may still hold a frowning aspect towards my moral character.

Permit me, however, to assure you, that whatever change may appear in me towards others, I shall ever be the same to you. The acquisition of fortune, and an elevation to honours, will not vary a line in my regard to those whose friendship has been so faithful to

me as your's has been; nor shall you ever have cause to repent of your assiduous kindness to me. There is a balance in the human passions, and the mind that is awake to a spirit of revenge is equally inspired by the sentiments of gratitude. There is a dirty crew who shall experience the former, while you may confide in my solemn assurance to you of a most ample exertion of the latter.

A propos: I must beg of you to forward the enclosed letter to — — —. With much difficulty I persuaded her some time ago to return to England; and I am apprehensive she may be already in town, expecting my arrival. If it be possible, contrive some means to free me from her persecutions, both for her sake and my own. Should she be come to London, you will know where to find her: make any promises you may think necessary in my name, and use every reason your imagination can suggest, to persuade her to return into the country.—You understand me.

— — and — — — are gone from hence this morning, to indulge their fancies in the business of cold iron and powder and ball. I was very near being hampered in the affair; but my sable suit and funeral duties excused me from the employment, and I suppose the

first news I shall hear of the event will be in England, where I hope shortly to see and embrace you. In the mean time, believe me

Most sincerely your's, &c.

LETTER XVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter reached me with a large packet of others, which my father's death had occasioned. How altered is the language of them upon the occasion! Your's, indeed, is exactly the same, or, if any thing, bears the tincture of more than usual severity. Flattery is a strain altogether new to me, and by the two last posts I have had enough to surfeit the most arrant coquette upon earth. It is true, I cannot compliment your letter with possessing an atom of adulation; nevertheless, it is the only one which has given me real pleasure, because it is the only one which bears the characters of real friendship. Though I have acted in such a direct opposition to your cautions and remonstrances, I am not the less sensible to that generous passion, which produced them, and has now taken the first opportunity to give me the essence, as it were, of all your former counsels, in thus calling

my attention to real and permanent honour. However I may offend you hereafter, you shall never again have cause to reproach me with a forfeiture of my word. I have, at present, lost that confidence in myself, which would justify me in offering assurances to you: the hopes of regaining it, however, are not entirely vanished, and when they are fulfilled, which, I trust, they will one day be, you shall receive the first fruits of my renovation.

I understand the purpose of your observation, that the generality of men employ the first part of life in making the remainder of it miserable. I feel its force, and consider it as an indirect caution to me not to pursue a conduct which must be attended with such a lamentable consequence. But, alas! *credula turba sumus;* though I have paid dearly for my credulity, unless it should be immediately followed by the fruits of an wholesome experience. We despise the world when we know it thoroughly; but we give ourselves up to it before we know it, and the heart is frequently lost before it is illuminated by the irradiations of reason.

I have now succeeded to the possession of those privileges which are a part, and perhaps

the best part of my inheritance. Clouds and darkness no longer rest upon me. My exterior of things is totally changed; and, however unmoved some men's minds may be by outward circumstances, mine is not composed of such cold materials as to be unaffected by them. Such an active spirit as animates my frame, must have objects important in their nature, inviting in their appearance, and animating in their pursuit. No longer forced to drown the sensibility to publick disgrace and private inconvenience in *Circean* draughts, my character, I trust, will unfold qualities which it has not been thought to possess, and finally dissipate the kind apprehensions of friendship.

My natural genius will now have a full scope for exertion in the line of political duty; and I am disposed to flatter myself, that the application necessary to make a respectable figure in that career, will leave me but little time for those miserable pursuits, which, of late, have been my only resource. But I must desire you not to expect an instant conversion: the æra of miracles is passed; and, besides, the world would suspect its sincerity. It is true, I am sinner sufficient to call down the interposition of Heaven, but the present age has no claim to such celestial notices.—

My amendment must be slow and progressive, though, I trust, in the end, sincere and effectual. But be assured, that, however the completion of your good wishes for me may be deferred, I am perfectly sensible that there is something necessary besides title, rank, and fortune, to constitute true honour.—With this sentiment I take my leave of you, and am, with real truth,

Your's, &c.

LETTER XVII.

MY DEAR ———,

I AM at an inn, and alone; and, if you were to guess for ten years, and had one of *Osborne's* Catalogues to assist you, sure I am that you would not divine the book which has amused my evening, and given a subject to this letter: nay, I may venture to tell you it is poetical, and still bid defiance to your penetration.

My two travelling volumes had been read twice in the course of my journey, and, as it would not be worth the trouble to unpack a trunk for more, I desired the waiter to ask his mistress to send me a book; and in the interim I amused myself with fancying what kind of publication would be brought me, resolving, however, if it should be the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Whole Duty of Man*, or even the Holy Bible, to make it the subject of my evening's lucubrations. The waiter returned, and desired to know if I chose prose or verse.

This I thought looked well; and my preference being declared for the latter, I was, in a few minutes, presented with a small volume, which I found to be a Presbyterian hymn book, entitled *Horæ Lyricæ*, by a Dr. Watts. My expectations were a little chagrined upon the occasion: however, I turned over a few pages, looking cursorily at the contents in my way, when I dropped upon a little odd composition, the subject of which was no less singular than applicable to myself. The title of it was, *Few Happy Matches*. From the character of the author, who was a dissenting minister, I had conceived that the reasons of matrimonial infelicity would be trite, whining, and scriptural, and that I should find some bouncing anathemas against such offenders as your humble servant: but it turned out quite otherwise; the idea is a fanciful one; and I dare affirm, that, if *Apollo* and the *Nine Muses* had racked their brains for a twelvemonth, they could not have hit upon such a conceit.

The poet supposes that human souls come forth in pairs of male and female from the hands of the Creator, who gives them to the winds of Heaven to bear them to our lower world, where, if they arrive safe and meet again, they instinctively impel the bodies they

animate towards each other, so as to produce an Hymeneal union, which, being originally designed by their author, must be necessarily happy; but, as from the length of the way, and the many storms, &c. that check and come across it, they are generally separated before they reach their destination, their re-union is very rare; and the forming an alliance with any other but the original counterpart, being, as it were, an extraneous connexion, must be necessarily miserable, and will produce those jarrings and contentions which so generally disturb matrimonial life. This ingenious fancy will make you smile; nor would the ideas which occur to me on the subject re-brace your muscles, if I had paper or time to bear me out in them. They must serve for another opportunity. Thus, according to my good Doctor Watts, matches are made in heaven, but marriages on earth. I should think some of them have been fabricated in ——

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* * but no more of that.

I really feel myself much indebted to this Pindarick Presbyterian for setting my conscience at rest, which, now and then, had a

momentary qualm on a certain subject. The unlucky counterpart, which accompanied my soul from Heaven's gates, was tossed in some whirlwind, driven by some lightning, or detained by some aerial frost, and, at length, I I suppose, cast ashore among the antipodes. We are not destined, I believe, to meet again; and I fear, poor soul! if I may judge from myself, that her lot is a very lamentable one, wherever it may be.

After all that sentimental talkers and sentimental writers may produce upon the subject, marriage must be considered as a species of traffick, and as much a matter of commerce as any commodity that fills the ware-house of the merchant. We exchange passion for passion, beauty, titles, &c. for money, youth for age, and so on. The business may sometimes answer; but there are few examples, I fear, when the profit and loss come to be stated, where the balance is considerable in favour of the former. Who, says the Spanish proverb, has ever seen a marriage without fraud, if beauty be a part of the portion? This idea will hold good in every other instance, and corroborates my principle of its being a matter of trade, which has its foundation in fraud and tricking. One marries for connex-

ions, another for wealth, a third from lust, a fourth to have an heir, to oblige his parents, and so on. Every one of your married friends will come under these or similar descriptions, except Lord C— —, who married his Lady, as he buys his buckles, because she was the *Ton;* and I doubt not, but he was completely miserable, that he could not change her, as he does his buckles, for the fashion of the next spring, or, perhaps, the next month.

Plato was at a loss under what class to rank women, whether among brutes or rational creatures: Doctor *Watts's* ideas are far more favourable to the sex, for he has not hesitated to give them celestial natures. I must acknowledge that I have my doubts upon the subject. *Mahometanism* has, certainly, some fine points about it: give him wine, and a *Turk's* life is not a bad one. So good night to you!——

LETTER XVIII.

YOUR string of modern wits is not worth a beadsman's rosary. The æra of wit is passed. There are not half a score of men in the kingdom who deserve that title; and the rising world give no hopes of its restoration.—The tree that bears such fruit is blasted. Do me the favour, I beseech you, to distinguish between a man of wit, and one who makes you laugh. The repetition of an old tale, a grimace, a blunder, the act of laughter in another, or even a serious look, may cause the muscular convulsion; but wit is not levelled so much at the muscles as at the heart, and the latter will sometimes smile when there is not a single wrinkle upon the cheek. How it could ever enter into your head to think *Chase Price* a wit, puzzles and perplexes me. He has no more pretensions to it than he has to grace. He is a good-humoured, jolly buffoon, that writes a bawdy song, and sings it; says things that nobody but himself would choose to say; and does things that nobody besides

would choose to do. Believe me, that *Chase's forte* is politicks; not publick, but private politicks; the science of which he understands better, and practises with more success, than any man in Great-Britain. He is never without a point in view, or a game to play; and he never sings a song, or tells a smutty tale, without some design. Mere amusement to himself or others is not Mr. Price's plan: his humour has been a good fortune to him; and he will contrive, I doubt not, to make it last as long as himself. Do you think, when *Bolingbroke*, *Swift*, *Arbuthnot*, *Pope*, &c. &c. were assembled together, that the conversation of such a bright constellation of men was like the ribaldry of Mr. Price? Their wit did not consist in roaring a bawdy catch, &c. it was the feast of reason, and the flow of soul. The flashes of imagination adorned and gave brilliance to the high discourse: wisdom was enlivened, and not wounded, by their wit; and, among them, the herd of laughter-loving fools would not have found a single grin to console them. If I were to sing one of Mr. Price's ballads, or to repeat one of his stories, you would receive, I fear, but little pleasure from the exhibition, because I could not give them the accompaniments of noise and grim-

ace, which form their principal merit: and, perhaps, besides my deficiency in acting my part, I might produce the entertainment an hour too soon. But wit may be repeated by any one at any time, and, I believe, in almost any language, with satisfaction and success: time may drown it in oblivion, but cannot alter its nature: as long as it is remembered it will please—while the facetious exhibitions of a boon companion will scarce survive his funeral. But to proceed in your catalogue.

Lord C——e's wit, as well as that of his friend, lies in his heels, and is so powerfully exerted in producing *entre-chats*, as to be languid to every other purpose. A few school-boy rhymes confer not the laurel of wit; and it was a great proof of an opposite character in this Nobleman to give his compositions to the world. He may understand French and Italian, and, perhaps, speak both those languages tolerably well; it is probable, also, that he may not have forgot every thing he learned at school: but indeed, indeed, my friend, he is no wit.

Charles Fox is highly gifted; his talents are of a very superiour nature; and, in my opinion, *Fitzpatrick* is scarcely behind him. In the article of colloquial merit, he is, at least,

his equal: but they neither of them possess that Attick character, which, while it corrects, gives strength to imagination, and, while it governs, gives dignity to wit. The late *Earl* of *Bath* and Mr. *Charles Townshend* were blessed with no inconsiderable share of it; and it is an intemperate vivacity of genius which confounds it in Mr. *Edmund Burke*.—But the man who is in the most perfect possession of it, has figured in so high a line of publick life, as to prevent the attention of mankind from leaving his greater qualities to consider his private and domestick character: I mean *Lord Chatham*, whose familiar conversation is only to be excelled by his publick eloquence. Perhaps Lord Mansfield was born, if I may use the expression, with every Attick disposition; but the shackles of a law-education and profession, and some other circumstances which I need not mention, have formalized, and, in some degree, repressed the brilliance of his genius. With respect to this great man, I cannot but pathetically apostrophize with Pope,

"How sweet an *Ovid* was in *Murray* lost!"

George Selwyn is very superiour to *Chase Price*, but very inferiour to *Charles Townshend*; against whom, however, he used, as I

am told, continually to get the laugh: but this proves nothing; for good-humoured *George Bodens* would have gained the prize from them both in the article of creating laughter. I may be wrong, perhaps, but it has ever appeared to me, that Mr. *Selwyn's* faculty of repartee is mechanical, and arises more from habit than from genius. It would be a miserable business indeed, if a man, who had been playing upon words for so many years, should not have attained the faculty of commanding them at his pleasure.

B— — converses with elegance; L— —n is an excellent critick; and many others of the same class may be found, who are well qualified to be members of a literary club, but no farther. *Garrick* is *himself* upon the stage, and an *actor* every where else. *Foote* is a mimick every where; excellent, delightful, on the theatre and in private society; but still a mimick. No one can take more pains than Mrs. M— — — to be surrounded with men of wit; she bribes, she pensions, she flatters, gives excellent dinners, is herself a very sensible woman, and of very pleasing manners; not young, indeed, but that is out of the question: and, in spite of all these encouragements, which, one would think, might make

wits spring out of the ground, the conversations of her house are too often critical and pedantick, something between the dulness and the pertness of learning. They are perfectly chaste, and generally instructive; but a cool and quiet observer would sometimes laugh to see how difficult a matter it is for *la belle Presidente* to give colour and life to her literary circles. It surprises me that you should leave *Windham* out of your list, who (observe my prophecy) will become one of the ablest men and shining characters that the latter part of this age will produce. I hazard little in such a *presentiment*; for his talents, judgment, and attainments will verify it.

The gibes and jests, that are wont to set the table in a roar, promote the chearful purposes of convivial society, but they have nothing to do with that *Attick* conversation which is the highest enjoyment of the human intellect.—Wit, believe me, is almost extinct; and I will tell you, among other reasons, why I think so: because no one seems to have any idea of what wit is, or who deserves the title of it. To think little, talk of every thing, and doubt of nothing; to use only the external parts of the soul, and cultivate the surface, as it were, of the judgment; to be happy in expression, to

have an agreeable fancy, an easy and refined conversation, and to be able to please, without acquiring esteem; to be born with the equivocal talent of a ready apprehension, and, on that account, to think one's self above reflection; to fly from object to object, without gaining a perfect knowledge of any; to gather hastily all the flowers, and never allow the fruit time to arrive at maturity: all these, collected together, form a faint picture of what the generality of people, in this age, are pleased to honour with the name of wit.

You must not be angry with me for this long letter, but rather be thankful that it is so short, considering the subject you threw before me, and the desire I have to set you a thinking on a subject of which you seem to have formed very wrong notions. I again repeat, that true wit is expiring, and great talents also. My words are prophetick, and a few years will determine the matter. It would not be a difficulty to prove the why and the wherefore; but of all subjects these half-metaphysical ones are the most unpleasant to

Your's, &c.

LETTER XIX.

MY DEAR — —,

WITHOUT any violent exertions of my natural vanity, I can easily imagine that the eye of mankind looks towards my political career; and that, for want of a better subject, there may be some among them who amuse themselves with forming conjectures concerning it. The ministry have attempted to feel my pulse upon the occasion, but without success; though I will tell you in confidence, that they have nothing, at present, to fear from me. In the great subject of this day's politicks, which seems to engulph every other, I am with them. I shall never cease to contend for the universality and unity of the *British Empire* over all its territories and dependencies, in every part of the globe. I have not a doubt of the legislative supremacy of Parliament over every part of the British dominions in *America*, the *East* and *West-Indies*, in *Africa*, and over *Ireland* itself.

I cannot separate the ideas of legislation and taxation; they seem to be more than twins; they were not only born but must co-exist and die together. The question of right is heard of no more; it is now become a question of power, and it appears to me that the sword will determine the contest. The Colonies pretend to be subject to the King alone; they deny subordination to the state, and, upon this principle, have not only declared against the authority of Parliament, but erected a government of their own, independent of British legislation. To support a disobedience to rights which they once acknowledged, they have already formed associations, armed and arrayed themselves, and are preparing to bring the question to the issue of battle. This being the case, it becomes highly necessary for us to arm also; we must prepare to quench the evil in its infancy, and to extinguish a flame which the natural enemies of *England* will not fail to feed with unremitting fuel, in order to consume our commerce and tarnish our glory. If wise measures are taken, this business will be soon completed, to the honour of the mother-country and the welfare of the Colonies, who, in spite of all the assistance given them by the House of

Bourbon, must, unless our government acts like an idiot, be forced to submission.

For my own part, I have not that high opinion of their Roman spirit, as to suppose that it will influence them contentedly to submit to all the horrours of war, or to resign every comfort in which they have been bred, to relinquish every hope with which they have been flattered, and retire to the howling wilderness for an habitation; and all for a dream of liberty, which, were they to possess to-morrow, would not give them a privilege superiour to those which they lately enjoyed, and might, I fear, deprive them of many which they experienced beneath the clement legislation of the British government.

I do not mean to enter at large into the subject; but, if ministers know what they are about, the matter may be soon decided: and in every measure which tends to promote such a desirable end, they shall receive all the poor helps I can give them—I will neither sit silent, nor remain inactive. But if, by neglect, ignorance, or an indecisive spirit (the latter of which I rather suspect from them) they should let the monster grow up into size and strength, my support shall be changed into opposition, and all my powers exerted to remove men

from a station, to which they are unequal.—Remember this assertion—preserve this letter—and let it appear in judgment against me, if I err from my present declaration.

I remain your's, &c.

LETTER XX.

IT was very natural, in such a *Strephon* as you are, to imagine that I had hurried away to court the nymphs; I mean the wood-nymphs of H— —. Now, I have so little thought about, or regard for, these ladies, that I had, at one time, determined to despoil their shade, and make a profitable use of the oaks which shelter them. You will shriek at the idea, like any *Hamadryad;* but in spite of shrieks or intreaties, I had it in contemplation to be patriotick, and give the groves of H— — to the service of my country.

The system of modern gardening, in spite of fashion and Mr. *Brown*, is a very foolish one. The huddling together every species of building into a park or garden, is ridiculous. The environs of a magnificent house should partake, in some degree, of the necessary formality of the building they surround.— This was *Kent's* opinion; and, where his designs have escaped the destruction of modern

refinement, there is an easy grandeur which is at once striking and delightful. Fine woods are beautiful objects, and their beauty approaches nearer to magnificence, as the mass of foliage becomes more visible; but to dot them with little white edifices, infringes upon their greatness, and, by such divisions and subdivisions, destroys their due effect. The verdure of British swells was not made for Grecian temples: a flock of sheep and a shepherd's hut are better adapted to it. Our climate is not suited to the deities of *Italy* and *Greece*, and in a hard winter I feel for the shuddering divinities. At H—— there is a *Temple* of *Theseus*, commonly called by the gardener the Temple of *Perseus*, which stares you in the face wherever you go; while the *Temple* of *God*, commonly called by the gardener the *Parish Church*, is so industriously hid by trees from without, that the pious matron can hardly read her prayer-book within. This was an evident preference of strange gods, and, in my opinion, a very blasphemous improvement. Where Nature is grand, improve her grandeur, not by adding extraneous decorations, but by removing obstructions. Where a scene is in itself lovely, very little is necessary to give it all due advantage,

especially if it be laid into park, which undergoes no variety of cultivation.

Stowe is, in my opinion, a most detestable place; and has in every part of it the air of a *Golgotha:* a princely one I must acknowledge; but in no part of it could I ever lose that gloomy idea. My own park possesses many and very rare beauties; but, from the design of making it classical, it has been charged with many false and unsuitable ornaments. A classical park, or a classical garden, is as ridiculous an expression as a classical plumb-pudding or a classical surloin of beef. It is an unworthy action to strip the classicks of their heroes, gods, and goddesses, to grow green amid the fogs of our unclassical climate. But the affectation and nonsense of little minds is beyond description.—How many are there, who, fearful that mankind will not discover their knowledge, are continually hanging out the sign of hard words and pedantick expressions, like the late *Lord Orrery*, who, for some classical reason, had given his dog a classical name; it was no less than *Cæsar!* However, *Cæsar*, one day, giving his Lordship a most unclassical bite, he seized a cane, and pursued him round the room with great solemnity and this truly clas-

sical menace—"*Cæsar! Cæsar! if I could* "*catch thee, Cæsar! I would give thee as ma-* "*ny wounds as Brutus gave thy name-sake in* "*the Capitol.*" This is the very froth of folly and affectation.

Adieu, &c.

LETTER XXI.

MY DEAR SIR,

I OBEY your commands with some reluctance, in relating the story of which you have heard so much, and to which your curiosity appears to be so broad awake. I do it unwillingly, because such histories depend so much upon the manner in which they are related; and this, which I have told with such success, and to the midnight terrours of so many simple souls, will make but a sorry figure in a written narration. However, you shall have it.

It was in the early part of ———'s life that he attended an hunting club at their sport, when a stranger, of a genteel appearance, and well mounted, joined the chace, and was observed to ride with a degree of courage and address that called forth the utmost astonishment of every one present. The beast he rode was of amazing powers; nothing stopped them; the hounds could never escape them; and the huntsman, who was

left far behind, swore that the man and his horse were both *devils from hell.* When the sport was over, the company invited this extraordinary person to dinner: he accepted the invitation, and astonished the company as much by the powers of his conversation and the elegance of his manners, as by his equestrian prowess. He was an orator, a poet, a painter, a musician, a lawyer, a divine; in short, he was every thing, and the magick of his discourse kept the drowsy sportsmen awake long after their usual hour. At length, however, wearied nature could be charmed no more; and the company began to steal away by degrees to their repose. On his observing the society diminish, he discovered manifest signs of uneasiness: he therefore gave new force to his spirits, and new charms to his conversation, in order to detain the remaining few some time longer. This had some little effect; but the period could not be long delayed when he was to be conducted to his chamber. The remains of the company retired also; but they had scarce closed their eyes, when the house was alarmed by the most terrible shrieks that were ever heard: several persons were awakened by the noise; but, its continuance being short, they concluded it to

proceed from a dog who might be accidentally confined in some part of the house: they very soon, therefore, composed themselves to sleep, and were very soon awakened by shrieks and cries of still greater terrour than the former. Alarmed at what they heard, several of them rung their bells, and, when the servants came, they declared that the horrid sounds proceeded from the stranger's chamber. Some of the gentlemen immediately arose, to enquire into this extraordinary disturbance; and, while they were dressing themselves for that purpose, deeper groans of despair, and shriller shrieks of agony, again astonished and terrified them. After knocking some time at the stranger's chamber-door, he answered them as one awakened from sleep, declared he had heard no noise, and, rather in an angry tone, desired he might not be again disturbed. Upon this they returned to one of their chambers, and had scarce begun to communicate their sentiments to each other, when their conversation was interrupted by a renewal of yells, screams, and shrieks, which, from the horrour of them, seemed to issue from the throats of damned and tortured spirits. They immediately followed the sounds, and traced them to the stranger's chamber, the door of which

they instantly burst open, and found him upon his knees in bed, in the act of scourging himself with the most unrelenting severity, his body streaming with blood. On their seizing his hand to stop the strokes, he begged them, in the most wringing tone of voice, as an act of mercy, that they would retire, assuring them that the cause of their disturbance was over, and that in the morning he would acquaint them with the reasons of the terrible cries they had heard, and the melancholy sight they saw. After a repetition of his entreaties, they retired; and in the morning some of them went to his chamber, but he was not there; and, on examining the bed, they found it to be one gore of blood. Upon further inquiry, the groom said, that, as soon as it was light, the gentleman came to the stable booted and spurred, desired his horse might be immediately saddled, and appeared to be extremely impatient till it was done; when he vaulted instantly into his saddle, and rode out of the yard on full speed.—Servants were immediately dispatched into every part of the surrounding country, but not a single trace of him could be found: such a person had not been seen by any one, nor has he since been heard of.

The circumstances of this strange story were immediately committed to writing, and signed by every one who were witnesses to them, that the future credibility of any one, who should think proper to relate them, might be duly supported. Among the subscribers to the truth of this history are some of the first names of this century.—It would now, I believe, be impertinent to add any thing more, than that I am,

Your's, &c.

LETTER XXII.

I THANK you most sincerely, my very dear friend, for your obliging congratulations on my late promotion; and I have no better way to answer the friendly counsels which accompany them, but by opening my heart to you upon the occasion, and trusting its sentiments with you.

You knew my father, and I am sure you will applaud me in declaring that his character did real honour to his rank and his nature. A grateful fame will wait upon his memory, till, by some new change in human affairs, the great and good men of this country and period shall be lost to the knowledge of distant generations. In the republick of letters he rose to a very considerable eminence; his deep political erudition is universally acknowledged; and, as a senator both of the lower and higher order, his name is honoured with distinguished veneration. In his private as well as publick life, he was connected and in friend-

ship with the first men of the time in which he lived; and, as a character of strict virtue and true piety, he has been universally held forth as the most striking example of this age. The idea of uncommon merit accompanies all opinion of him; and to mention his name is to awaken the most pleasing and amiable sentiments. As you read this short and imperfect outline of his character, fill it up and do it justice. Now, it will, perhaps, surprise you, when you are informed, that the post in government which this great and good man most desired, and could never obtain, was the *Chief Justiceship in Eyre*, &c. &c. The reverse of the picture is as follows: that your humble servant, and his *gracious* son, whose character you perfectly know, has been appointed to this very post, in the infancy of his peerage, without any previous service performed, hint given, or requisition made on his part, and without the proposition of, and conditions on the part of, the Minister. When I was surprised by the offer, I was surprised also by a sudden and unusual suffusion on my cheeks, at the contrast of mine and my father's character—of mine and my father's lot. Indeed, so big was my heart on the occasion, that, when the ministerial ambassadour had left me,

the sentiments of it burst forth upon the first person I saw, who happened not to be a very proper receptacle for the reflections of virtue. There is a very great encouragement in this world to be wicked, and the *Devil* certainly goes about in more pleasing shapes than that of *a roaring lion*. In the name of fortune, my dear friend, how and why are these things? Is it the increasing corruption of the times, or the weakness of government, that gives to dissolute men the meed of virtue; or do ministers think it expedient to give a sop to the mastiff whose growl might make them tremble? You, who have made men and manners your study, who have looked so deeply into the volume of the heart, and have acquired such an happy art of reconciling the apparent inconsistencies of human affairs, must instruct me. I wish you could improve and convert me! I am not insensible to what is good; nay, there are moments when the full lustre of virtue beams upon me. I try to seize it; but the gleam escapes me, and I am re-involved in darkness. The conflict of reason and passion is but the conflict of a moment; and the latter never fails to bear me off in triumph.

——— Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

I am your's most truly, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

I WISH the *Morning Post*, and every other Post that scatters such malignant, false, and detestable histories, in the bottomless pit, with its writers, printers, editors, publishers, collectors, and purchasers. To be the subject of an occasional paragraph is not worth a frown. It is a tax which every one in high station must pay, be he good, or be he bad, to that demon of calumny, who now has a temple prepared for his service at every breakfast-table in the metropolis. But to be the sole theme of a scandalous chronicle, and to see it not only saved from oblivion, but raised into universal notice and reception, from its abusive histories of me, is a circumstance big with every pain and penalty of mortification. To add to my distress, no means of satisfaction or revenge are in my power; and, if resentment were to weave a scourge, and I could use it to my wishes, I should only give new materials to prolong the tale. The business of silent

contempt is above me; and the mode of conduct you recommend is like St. *Austin's* reason for belief, *quia impossibile est.* I cannot enter an house where the page of my dishonour does not lie upon the table. Every man who meets me in the street, tells me by his very looks that he has read it. I have overheard my own servants observing upon it, and the very chairmen can repeat its tales. I expect every day that my horse, like Balaam's ass, will neigh scandal at me; not indeed from celestial, but hellish intervention.

Some steps, however, must be taken, and some method adopted to silence the cry. To bribe the hounds, would produce a mortification almost equal to what I now suffer; but there is no divining how long the story may last, and the *toth canitabitur urbe* is terrible.—Bear it I cannot, and revenge is not in my power. The rascal keeps within the circle of privilege; and, if he should slip out of it, I am afraid that it would not answer my purpose to avail myself of his incaution. In short, I don't know what to do. You will oblige me more than ever, in forming some wise resolutions for me, and in persuading me to execute them.—Adieu!

LETTER XXIV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR sensibility towards me during my late persecution, is a flattering mark of that affectionate esteem which you have ever borne me. I most sincerely thank you for it; and have only to wish that the world knew I still retain so warm a place in your heart. Such a circumstance would serve as an antidote against the poison which has been instilled into the minds of mankind on my subject. The batteries of scandal are at length turned from me; and some new object of their rage will, I hope, make their thundering attack upon me to be quickly forgotten.

I love my country, its constitution, and its privileges, too well to say, write, or even think, any thing against that palladium of British freedom, the liberty of the press, though I have been such a sufferer by it.—While it remains, (and may it ever remain!) the people of England will have a security for those privileges which give them a supe-

riority over every other nation. Perhaps the enormities of private scandal should be checked, at the same time that, I think, it would be dangerous to suffer even an excrescence of any staple privilege to be cut off. The track of innovation widens every moment; and on this example, if it was once opened, there is no saying where it would end.

A priest, I think, is said to have invented gun-powder; and a soldier has the credit of first suggesting *The Art of Printing:* and I have heard wonderfully curious and profound observations made upon the strange combination of the inventors and their *inventions.*—But, surely, it does not require a moment's reflection to discover, that this improvement in the business of war, as well as in the republick of letters, could not have proceeded so naturally from any other characters. It is, I believe, universally allowed, that, since the introduction of artillery and fire-arms, the trade of war is become comparatively innocent: slaughter no longer wades knee-deep in blood; and her sword is now no sooner drawn than it is satisfied. A discovery, therefore, which has lessened the carnage and horrours of battle, was most naturally produced by a minister of the gospel of peace. On the

contrary, we have only to examine the history of letters since the invention of printing, and lo! what an host of polemical writers appear, armed with the most bitter spirit of malice and resentment! What feuds, both national and domestick, have arisen from it! What rage has been inflamed! How many wars have been engendered! What disgraceful, inflammatory, and unchristian controversies maintained! How many scandals of every kind have been propagated, and what passions have been incited by it! &c. &c. so that the most free governments have been obliged to enact laws to restrain and controul it. Such an invention, therefore, may be said to proceed, in its natural course, from one whose profession is founded in the animosities, injustice, and malevolence of mankind. I doubt not but you will now agree with me, that the world is, as it ought to be, more indebted to the priest than the soldier. You will tell me, perhaps, that this argument arises from the smarting of my wounds, which are not yet skinned over: I feel myself of a contrary opinion; but I will quit the subject till not a scar remains, when I shall take the opportunity of some tranquil hour to bring the matter, by your leave, into debate with you.

I remain, with great regard, &c.

LETTER XXV.

MY DEAR ——,

I MUST acknowledge, notwithstanding I am treated with some degree of civility in it, that the dedication you mention is a wretched business, and disgraces the volume to which it is prefixed. You wonder I did not write a better for him myself; and I would, most assuredly, have done it, but, among many excellent qualities which this dedicator possesses, he is a blab of the first delivery, and I dared not venture to trust him.

The testamentary arrangement which appointed him to the honourable labours of an editor, took its rise from three motives: first, to mark a degree of parental resentment against an ungracious son; secondly, from an opinion that a gracious nephew's well-timed flatteries had created of his own understanding; and, thirdly, from a design of bestowing upon this self-same gracious nephew a legacy of honour from the publication, and of

profit from the sale of the volume. He is as proud of the business as a new-made knight of his title, is never easy but when he is receiving incense from book-sellers and their journeymen, and loves to be pointed at as a child of science. I wish he may be contented with his present celebrity; though, if I know him aright, this editorial business will awaken ideas of his having talents for a superiour character, and that he is qualified to publish his own works with as much *eclat* as he has done those of another. If he attempts to climb the ladder of ambition in any, but particularly in a literary way, he must fall. I have counselled him to be content; and the booby gives it out that I am envious of his reputation. Poor, silly fool! I only wish the daw may keep the one poor feather he has got; for, if he attempts any addition to his plumage, the vanity will draw him into a scrape, in which he will be stripped as bare as nature made him.

But, to change my subject to a coxcomb of another sex: Mrs. ——— has done what she has no right to do, and has said what she is not authorised to say. It is not in the power, even of so able and so respectable an advocate as yourself, to work up any thing that

has the semblance of a satisfactory justification. Your arguments, which are so powerful in the cause of truth, are the slightest of all cobwebs in support, or, I should rather say, in palliation of falsehood. This, among other things, is much to your honour, and I congratulate your disqualification to plead a bad cause. If you have been a volunteer on the occasion, I compliment your gallantry: if you have been influenced by the lady's request, I admire your ready friendship. You have every merit with me; and, to give you the satisfaction you so well deserve, I cannot but authorise you to set the dame at rest, and to hush her every fear. This is no small sacrifice; for I have the most ample means of vengeance in my hands: and, if it will advance your interests at her court, you have full permission to declare that my wrath has been averted by your interposition.

——Nullum memorabile nomen
Fœminea in pœnâ est, nec habet victoria laudem.

I remain, very truly, &c. &c.

LETTER XXVI.

YOU have won both your wagers.—In speaking of the inhabitants of *China*, I *do* make use of the word *Chineses*; and I borrow the term from *Milton*. As to your first bet, that I used such an expression, your ears, I trust, will be grateful for the confidence you had in them. But your second wager, that, if I did use it, I had a good authority, is very flattering to myself; and I thank you for the opinion you entertain of the accuracy of my language. My memory will not, at this moment, direct you to the page; but you will readily find the word in the Index of *Newton's* edition of *Milton*.

Of all the poets that have graced ancient times, or delighted the latter ages, *Milton* is my favourite; I think him superiour to every other, and the writer of all others best calculated to elevate the mind, to form a nobleness of taste, and to teach a bold, commanding, energetick language. I read him with

delight as soon as I could read him at all; and, I remember, in my father's words, I gave the first token of premature abilities in the perusal of the *Paradise Lost.* I was quite a boy, when, in reading that poem, I was so forcibly struck with a passage, that I laid down the book with some violence on the table, and took an hasty turn to the other end of the room. Upon explaining the cause of this emotion to my father, he clasped me in his arms, smothered me with embraces, and immediately wrote letters to all his family and friends, to inform them of the wonderful foreboding I had given of future genius. Your curiosity may naturally expect to be gratified with the passage in question; I quote it, therefore, for your reflection and amusement:

> He spake; and, to confirm his words, out flew
> Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
> Of mighty Cherubim: the sudden blaze
> Far round illumin'd Hell!

The two principal orators of the present age (and one of them, perhaps, a greater than has been produced in any age) are the Earls of *Mansfield* and *Chatham.* The former is a great man; *Ciceronian,* but, I should think, inferiour to *Cicero.* The latter is a greater man; *Demosthenian,* but superiour to *Demosthenes.* The first formed himself on the mod-

el of the great Roman orator; he studied, translated, rehearsed, and acted his orations: the second disdained imitation, and was himself a model of eloquence, of which no idea can be formed but by those who have seen and heard him. His words have sometimes frozen my young blood into stagnation, and sometimes made it pace in such an hurry through my veins, that I could scarce support it. He however, embellished his ideas by classical amusements, and occasionally read the sermons of *Barrow*, which he considered as a mine of nervous expressions: but, not content to correct and instruct his imagination by the works of mortal men, he borrowed his noblest images from the language of inspiration. Mr. *Edmund Burke* also gives an happy dignity to parts of his speeches (a want of which is, in general, their only defect) by the application of scriptural expressions.

Though I have such bright and venerable examples before my eyes, I pursue a somewhat different, but not an opposite track; for *Milton*, from the excellence and form of his works, has every claim to the title of a *classick:* from the nature also of his principal subjects, which are drawn from scripture, we

may be said, in some degree, to read the sacred writings when his great poetical commentary of them (for so I shall call his *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*) is the object of our studies. The orations of *Cicero*, notwithstanding their character in the world, please, but do not inflame me. We are at too great a distance from the period, and have not a sufficient idea of the manner of their delivery, to be affected by them. They are very fine compositions; and it is the evidence of their being compositions that is their chief fault: and if *Lord Mansfield* were to pronounce the best of them, in his best manner, I doubt much of their supposed effect. They chill the warmth of my feelings; and I have often essayed, but in vain, to work up in me an elevation of mind and spirits from a repetition of the Roman orations. I must acknowledge that *Lord Bolingbroke*, a great and splendid authority, is against me, who, in language more animating than I could ever find in *Tully's* eloquence, declares that no man who has a soul can read his orations, after the revolutions of so many ages, after the extinction of the governments and of the people for whom they were composed, without feeling at this hour the passions they were designed to move, and the

spirit they were designed to raise. If this be true, in his Lordship's sense of the expression, I have no soul: but I suspect the truth of this assertion, as I well know that he would, at any time, sacrifice a just criticism to a brilliant passage. His character and genius were both intemperate; and, when his tongue or his pen were pleased with their subjects, he was borne rapidly on by the stream of eloquence, not considering or caring whither he went. When his imagination was once kindled, it was an equal chance whether he obscured virtue, or dignified vice. The source of his delusive writings was an head-strong, vivid fancy, which practised as great deceits upon himself, as he had ever done upon mankind. But to return to my subject—

For the life of me, I cannot read sermons even with Lord *Chatham*; and my hands are too unhallowed to unfold the sacred volume: but I find in *Milton's* poems every thing that is sublime in thought, beautiful in imagery, and energetick in language and expression. To attain a reputation for eloquence is my aim and my ambition; and, if I should acquire the art of clothing my thoughts in happy language, adorning them with striking images, or enforcing them by commanding

words, I shall be indebted for such advantages to the study of our great British classick.

I know you would not recommend my friends, the poets, to take a leading part in the study of eloquence. You may, probably, apprehend that poetical pursuits would be apt to give too poetical a turn to discourse as well as writing; and to beget a greater attention to sound than to sense. Such an idea is certainly founded in truth; and your objections are perfectly sensible, when an application to the poets is not conducted with judgment, and moderated by prosaick reading and exercises. A little circumstance in point, which just occurs to me, will make you smile: when my father completed the first copy of his history, the friends, to whom he sent it for their criticism and correction, universally agreed in its being written in a kind of irregular blank verse, from the beginning to the end. He was much surprised at the information; but, on examining his work, he found it to be true, and gave to the whole the excellent dress it now wears. Sir Robert R—— was so unfair as to impress some of the passages upon his memory, and has since been so ill-natured as to repeat them. But, to put a period to this

long letter, I declare myself to be very angry, when you are but twenty miles from me, that you should not put your horses to your chaise, and be here in a shorter space of time than is necessary to fill up half a sheet of paper.—You will do well to come and amuse yourself here, leaving gouty uncles and croaking aunts to themselves. There is more vivacity concentrated in my little dell, than is to be found in all the ample sweets of your vale. As you are musical, I will prepare a syren to sing to you, and you shall accompany her in any manner you please. Adieu!

Your's most truly, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

I CANNOT yet fancy the suspected preliminaries of alliance between *France* and *America;* and I will tell you why: because I think it will not be the mutual interest of either of them to engage in such a treaty.—The French finances are not in a state to justify the risking a war with England, which an open alliance with America must immediately produce. *Monsieur de Maupouz* and *Monsieur de Necker*, if I am rightly informed, are of the same opinion, and, I believe, from nobler motives and better reasons, are in opposition to those proposals which the *Americans* are said to have offered to induce France to give an avowed support to their cause. My information goes somewhat farther, and assures me, that the opinions of the two statesmen already mentioned are supported by all the graver men and older officers in the kingdom. *America*, at present, makes a very powerful and extraordinary resistance, and there seems to be a spirit awakened in her people, which will woefully

prolong the period of her reduction. The contest is, at present, between a child, forced into resistance by what it calls tyranny, and a parent, enraged at filial ingratitude, who is resolved to reclaim his offspring by force and chastisement. In such a state, though a mad spirit of rebellion may instigate revolted children to act against the parent, and the brethren of the house of their parent, the latter will go very reluctantly to the business of blood-shed; and many a brave man will consider the duty of the soldier and the citizen as incompatible, and let the former sink into the latter. But the moment that *America* flies for protection to the arms of *France*, the case will be changed: every tie of consanguinity will be then broken; it will be impossible to distinguish between them and their allies; they will be all the object of one common resentment; and the *Americans* must expect, as they will surely find, an equal exertion against them as will be employed against their insidious supporters.

But this is not the only reason why I think *America* will maintain the contest better without the open support of *France;* I have another, in the natural aversion they bear to each other. No two civilized nations, in the same quarter of the globe, can bear a more

different and clashing character than *France* and the revolted colonies. Fire and water would as soon blend their opposite elements, as the solemn, gloomy, unpolished *American*, with the gay, sprightly, animated *Frenchman*. Besides, how will it be possible for the simple, sullen leaven of *Calvinism* to be kneaded in the same lump with the motley genius and complicated ceremony of Popery? While the hope for independence keeps alive the spirit of contention, such considerations, if suggested at all, will, for a time, give way to their ambition; but, should the object of it be attained, they would arise, on the first interval of repose, in all the bitterness of disunion, and bring on a scene of internal confusion big with greater horrours than they now experience.—What will these deluded people think, and how will they act, who, after manifesting such a solemn and bold aversion to the power of a Protestant Bishop, after having held forth the act of parliament, which gave to the conquered inhabitants of Canada a toleration of their religion, as one of their justifications to rebellion!—I repeat again, what will be the conduct of these people, when they see the cross adored in their streets, and hear the benedictions and anathemas of Rome pronounced in their cities!

For my own part, I cannot conceive such an event as *American* Independence; and, in my poor opinion, if it were to be given them to-morrow, it would, in the end, prove a worse present than the *Stamp-Act* itself, with all its aggravated horrours. The guards are ordered to cross the *Atlantick*, and —— along with them. I am glad you like him; I thought my prophecy in that particular would be fulfilled. You knew *Madame*, I think, at *Geneva*. They both possess the same disposition to give a pleasant turn to every thing. They put their son to board *chez un Bourgois de Dijon*, and have never since troubled themselves about the boy, or the pension stipulated for his support. Luckily for the child, the man to whose care he was entrusted has taken a fancy to him, and declares, if he should be deserted by his parents, that he will do his best to provide for him; and our friends think it the best joke in the world.

I have been to see the *Justitia* hulk, where, among many other miserables, I saw poor *Digwam* wear the habit of a slave. He seemed disposed to speak to me; but I had previously desired the superintendent to request him, since it was not in my power to do him service, to wave all appearance of his having

known me. This mode of punishment offers a very shocking spectacle, and, I think, must undergo some alleviation, if it be not entirely abolished. If it were to come again before parliament, I should give the subject a very serious consideration, and the measure a very serious opposition. Is it not extraordinary, that the first publick exhibition of slavery in this kingdom—for so it is, however the situation may be qualified by law—should be suggested by a Scotchman, and that the first regulator of this miserable business should be from the same country? I do not mean to throw out any unpleasant ideas concerning any one, whose lot it was to be born on the other side of the *Tweed*, but merely to state a fact for your observation. I have known many of my northern fellow-subjects, and esteemed them. *David Hume* possesses my sincere admiration; but though the object of his writings was to remove prejudices, he himself possessed the strongest in favour of his country, and was, as is the great weakness of Scotchmen, so jealous of its honour, that I gave him great offence at *Lord Hertford's* at *Ragley*, by asking him at what time of the year the harvest was housed in *Scotland*.—My question arose from an innocent desire of

being satisfied in that particular: but he conceived it to convey a suspicion, that there was no harvest, or at least no barns, in his country; and his answer was slight and churlish. Fare you well! If you hear any thing on the continent that at all concerns the present state of publick affairs, I beg you will not fail to favour me with the most early communication.

I am, with great sincerity, &c.

LETTER XXVIII.

MY DEAR — —,

I CANNOT assert it as a matter within my own knowledge; but I have some reason to believe, that the late *Earl of Bath*, at the close of life, manifested a kind of preference of the *French* to the *English* government.—Upon what principles such an opinion was grounded, I cannot pretend to say: it is impossible he could form it in the abstract; it must arise, therefore, from pride of heart, degrading sentiments of mankind, a natural love of power, or from some of those selfish motives which grow more strong and prevalent as men approach the end of their days. In short, the French government might be more suitable to his character and disposition; and, though this conjecture is not in his favour, I believe it to have a foundation in truth. It is a common case among mankind, where reason and judgment are perverted by the strength of habitual inclination. I will give you an example that shall please you.

No one of common understanding, and who has the least idea of human affairs or knowledge of human nature, after a comparative examination of the *Gospel* and the *Alcoran*, but will give to the former a most instant, decided, and universal preference. He will admire the rational and amiable doctrines of the one, and as readily acknowledge the absurdities of the other. Nevertheless, there are men of sense—I know some of them, and so do you, my friend—who would so far yield to the warm desire of habitual gratification, as to give their immediate consent to exchange Christianity for the religion of *Mahomet*.—Lord *Bath* must have been indebted for the opinions given to him, to the triumph of an irrational self-love over a rational love of mankind: perhaps to the imbecility of his social affections may be added the strange caprices of disappointed dotage.

I have either read or heard an assertion, that it is impossible to find upon earth a society of men, who govern themselves upon principles of humanity; and I am forced to acknowledge, that the opinion will find a very powerful support in the customs of almost every country in the world. Whoever will consider with attention the histories of mankind,

and examine, with an impartial eye, the conduct of different nations, will be soon convinced, that, except those duties which are absolutely necessary to the preservation of the human species, he cannot name any principle of morals, nor imagine any rule of virtue, which, in some part or other of the world, is not directly contradicted by the general practice of entire societies. The most polished nations have supposed, that they had an equal right to expose their children, as to bring them into the world. There are countries now existing, where the child feels it as an high act of filial duty to desert or murder their parents, when they can no longer contribute to their own support. *Garcilasso de la Vega* relates, that certain people of *Peru* make concubines of their female prisoners of war, nourish and carefully feed the children they have by them, on whom they afterwards feast. But this is not all; when the wretched mother can no longer furnish the delicacies of their horrid banquets from her womb, she shares the fate of her offspring, and becomes the meal of the barbarians, whose throats had been moistened with the blood of her children.

It would be a matter of very little difficulty to fill a volume with the various inhumanities

which mingle with the governments of the *Asian*, *African*, and savage *American* nations of this day. The historians also of ancient times, would greatly increase the sad history of human calamity; nor is the quarter of the world which we inhabit exempted from furnishing its quota to the miserable account.—The various customs, religions, and governments which divide more enlightened *Europe*, might furnish a multitude of actions less barbarous, indeed, in their appearance, but as reprehensible in reality, and as dangerous in their consequences, as those already recited.

England, however, has this advantage over the rest of her neighbour kingdoms, that the examples of inhumanity which she has produced have arisen from an audacious abuse of her laws; while those of other nations seem to arise from the nature of their constitutions. A code of such wise, rational, and humane legislation never was known in the world, as that which prescribes the rule of conduct, as well to the governours as to the governed, in our kingdom. The principles of it are founded in the perfection of human reason, and, in a certain degree, on that happy union of justice and mercy which divines have given to the decrees of Omnipotence.—

But my paper admonishes me to quit this interesting subject, or it will not leave me a space sufficient to assure you with what real regard I am

Your's, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

THE first article of your letter, which tells me of ——'s death, has very much affected me; and, if it had arrived three hours sooner, I would have set off for London, to have dissipated the grave thoughts it occasions. I can hardly give credit to your account of her last moments: she had much to regret; rank, fortune, friends, and beauty, which, *St. Evremond* says, a woman parts with more reluctantly than even life itself.—By this time, I trust, she has reached the Elysian Fields, and, with the blest inhabitants of that delightful abode,

> On flow'rs repos'd, and with fresh garlands crown'd,
> Quaffs immortality and joy.——

However that may be, the event of her death is very sensibly felt by me. I shall miss her very much; not indeed as an acquaintance—for she would admit me only to her publick assemblies—but as an object of respect: and truly sorry am I that she is gone, for the sake of her sex, as she has not left one

behind who can supply her place in my good opinion. I had a sort of occasional respect for every woman on her account, which I fear will be buried in her grave. She had nothing of female inconsistency about her, and every thing of female delicacy. She conversed with the understanding of a man, but with the grace and elegance of her own sex. Her sentiments, language, and manners, were, like her own frame, in the image of man, but possessing every attraction of female nature. I will tell you a secret; she was the only woman who ever made me blush, and she once dyed my cheeks with such a crimson shame, that I feel them glow at this distant moment.

To maintain the qualities of goodness, tenderness, affection, and sincerity, in the several offices of life; to disdain ambition, avarice, luxury, and wantonness; and to avoid affectation, folly, childishness, and levity—is the consummation of a female character, and was fully accomplished in the lovely woman who is no more. She little thought, I believe, that it would be an employment of mine to pen her eulogium; and you smile, I suppose, at my

pretensions to describe female perfection. To tell you the truth, I strained very hard to produce the foregoing period. My brain had a severe labour of it, and suffered no small pains in the delivery. However, I now recommend the pious bantling to your care; and, I think, the midwife and the nurse will not contest the business of superiour qualifications.

I put an end to the pleasure of my acquaintance with ——— at the *Duke of Bolton's* masquerade at *Hackwood*, some years ago, by what I thought a little simple love-making, but which she thought impudence; and she has never suffered me to approach her since that time, but upon the most distant footing. You may know, perhaps, that I have got a terrible character for this self-same vice of effrontery, and, I am afraid, not without some little reason. It is, upon the whole, an imprudent mode of proceeding; and, though attended with more success than modest people may imagine, as you well know, never has a prosperous conclusion. One failure tacks a miserable epithet to one's name for ever. In military operations, the attack by storm sometimes effects great matters; but, on such a design, a repulse is sometimes fatal, and always attended with much loss and blood-shed. This

has been the case with me in fields less glorious, but far more delightful, than those of *Mars*.

The arrival of news-papers has caused a short interruption to my writing; and they acquaint me with a circumstance which you have omitted, that she died in child-bed. It was a custom, as I have read, among some of the ancient nations, to bury the infant alive with the mother whose death it had occasioned. I shudder at the idea; nevertheless, in this particular instance, I am disposed to vote all my malice to the brat which has deprived the world of so bright an ornament. Adieu!—Shall I pay a compliment to your penetration, in supposing that you will perceive how tardily my pen has proceeded to the bottom of the page? But this is literally the fact. The French proverb says, *On ne parle jamais de bonne foi, quand on parle mal des femmes.* I apprehended you would be unlucky enough to reverse the sentiment, and apply it to

Your's, &c.

LETTER XXX.

—WE all of us grew suddenly tired of our *Wiltshire* rustication; and, without a dissentient voice, voted a party to *Bristol*, where I eat such excellent turtle, and drank such execrable wine, that, with the heat of the weather into the bargain, I was suddenly taken ill at the play-house, almost to fainting, and was obliged to hurry into the air for respiration. Believe me, I did not like the business. Cold sweats and shiverings, accompanied with internal sinkings, gave me a better notion of dying than I had before, and made me think so seriously of this mortal life, that, on my return home, I shall take the opportunity of the first gloomy day to make my will, appoint executors, and harangue my lawyer into low spirits on the doctrine of death and judgment.

I exhibited myself—for none of the party would accompany me—at a publick breakfast at the *Hot Wells*, and sat down at a long table with a number of animated cadavers, who devoured their meal as if they had not an hour

to live; and, indeed, many of them seemed to be in that doleful predicament. But this was not all. I saw three or four groups of hectick spectres engage in cotillions: it brought instantly to my mind *Holbein's Dance of Death;* and methought I saw the raw-boned scarecrow piping and tabouring to his victims.—So I proceeded to the fountain; but, instead of rosy, blooming health, diseases of every colour and complexion guarded the springs. As I approached to taste them, I was fanned by the fœtid breath of gasping consumptions, stunned with expiring coughs, and suffocated with the effluvia of ulcerated lungs. Such a living *Golgotha* never entered into my conceptions; and I could not but look upon the stupendous rocks, that rise in rude magnificence around the place, as the wide-spreading jaws of an universal sepulchre.

Lord *Walpole* told me he was there in attendance upon a daughter. I was glad to turn my back upon the scene: but I had not yet come to the conclusion of it; for as I was waiting for my chaise, two different persons put cards into my hand, which informed me where funerals were to be furnished with the greatest expedition, and that hearses and mourning coaches were to let to any part of England.

I immediately leaped into my carriage, and ordered the postilion to drive with all possible haste from a place, where I was in danger of being buried alive.

After all, this tenancy of life is but a bad one, with its waste and ingress of torturing diseases; which, not content with destroying the building, maliciously torture the possessor with such pains and penalties, as to make him oftentimes curse the possession.

> Man's feeble race what ills await!
> Labour and penury—the racks of pain:
> Disease and sorrow's mournful train,
> And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate.

If I continue this kind of letter any farther, you will tell me that I shall repent, found hospitals, and die a Methodist; and that *Rochester's* funeral-sermon and mine will be bound up in the same volume, to the edification and comfort of all sinners of every enormity. Adieu, therefore, and believe me, very truly,

Your's, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

I NEITHER hunt nor shoot; the former is a diversion which requires certain sacrifices that I cannot grant, and shall not enumerate; the latter suits me better, but is as little pursued as the other. The business and form, not to say tyranny, of preserving game, which is necessary to establish a certainty of sport, is not to my way of thinking. The laws concerning game form a very unconstitutional monopoly: but that is not all; the peace and society of provincial vicinities are more or less disturbed, by jealousies and disputes arising from the game, in every part of the kingdom. My country employments are better than you imagine. I am reading, with great care and observation, the works of the Chancellor *D'Agueseau* of *France*. Many years ago, my father gave a volume of them to me, desiring me to study it with attention, and consider the contents as his own paternal counsels. At that time I did neither the one nor the other; however, I am now making ample amends for for-

mer neglect. The magistrate, the statesman, the lawyer, the man of the world, the orator, and the philosopher will find delight and instruction in these volumes. I can say no more; and what I have now said will add them to your library, if it does not already possess them.

You must know that I am angry with you for writing to me; or, rather, for not coming, instead of writing. Delay not to visit a place you so much admire, and to see a friend who loves and values you. We will study together in the morning, and court the Muses in the evening; and you shall visit *Pope's* urn by moon-light, and I will promise not to laugh at you. I propose to remain here a fortnight longer; but, if you will come to me, the time of my departure shall be prolonged to your pleasure. I am, with real regard,

Your most faithful, &c.

LETTER XXXII.

MY LORD,

IN obedience to your Lordship's commands, I have left no place unsearched, and have ordered every possible inquiry to be made after the manuscript which my father read to you a short time before his death, but in vain. As he had determined upon a republication of his Miscellaneous Works, with the addition of some pieces which had never been printed, I imagine he was cautious about preserving any papers or compositions that were not in his opinion sufficiently prepared for the press, lest the partiality of his surviving friends might give them to the world.

I am apprehensive, my Lord, that the manuscript in question shared the fate of many others which he had not an inclination to finish, and did not choose to leave in an unfinished state. However, in my search, I found three or four large sheets of paper in a folio volume, which appear to contain extracts from the memoirs of the great men of the last and

present centuries, and were probably some of the rude materials that formed the biographical sketches which your Lordship so much admired, and whose loss, on that account, gives me so much concern. These papers contain little more than scraps of characters. The principal object of them seems to be the *Duke de Vari*, ambassador plenipotentiary from the French king, for the peace of *Nimeguen*; but it is impossible to form out of them any satisfactory account of that able negociator. That my letter, however, may not be entirely without amusement, I shall add a couple of quotations, which I have found among the rest, from the characters of very figuring personages on the theatre of *Europe*. I call them quotations, as they are written in Italian, though I cannot name the author from whence they are taken, and are immediately followed by the character of *Petronius*, from the annals of *Tacitus*. The first of them relates to *Cardinal Mazarin*, and the second to *Oliver Cromwell*. I shall make no apology to your Lordship for their language, as I have been informed that you understand it equally well with your own. I am, my Lord,

With great respect
And obligation, &c.

CARDINAL MAZARINI.

MOLTO la natura, non poco l'arte, tutto gli contribuì la fortuna, che supplì con la dignità ciò che mancò ne' natali. Egli haveva bella e grata presenza, faccia lieta & amabile, occhi vaghi, gratia e decoro ugualmente se parlava, o tacevà. Più che fino e capace in simular l'intentioni, e dissimulare gli affetti. La fortuna lo sostenne ad ogni passo, e se pur alcuna volta les pose al timor & al pericolo, non fu che per animarlo, e per trarnelo con maggiore trionfo.

CROMWELL.

HUOMO grande ne i vitii, e nelle virtù, che nell' arbitrio di licentiosa fortuna visse con mirabile continenza, sobrio, casto, modesto, vigilante, indefesso, ma da estrema ambitione agitato, appena potè satiarsi col sangue del Re, e coll' oppressione del regno.

LETTER XXXIII.

HAVE you ever by chance looked into a book on the science of cookery? If so, have you not observed, that the culinary disciple is instructed, when certain quantities of gravy, or essence, or conserves, are prepared, *to put them by for use?* Now, if we could manage our ideas in the same manner; if we could lock up our acquired thoughts and knowledge in a kind of intellectual store-room, from whence they might be drawn forth for application; we should no longer be the slaves of a capricious recollection, which at this hour offers its treasures with intuitive readiness, yields them on the morrow with sullen reluctance, and on the succeeding day may refuse them to our most arduous researches. The active events of life, however, seldom die on the remembrance; and you must certainly be mistaken in associating with me the circumstance you mention in your letter, which is at this instant before me. It is morally impossible that I should have forgot-

ten it. My memory, perhaps, is the only faculty I possess, which has not at one time or other deceived me: nay, so firm is its texture, that the oblivious hours of courtship do not affect its wonted capacities—though, to say the truth, mine is a very drowsy progress.—Assiduity without love, tenderness without sincerity, and dalliance without desire, afford the miserable, the hopeless, but the faithful picture of my sluggish journey to the temple of Hymen. However, to give something of colour to the intervening hours between consent and fruition, his Lordship performs wonders, and sighs and flatters for his heedless son: nay, he tunes his neglected lyre, and sings the power of those charms, which, by an Anti-Circean fascination, are destined, by his fancy, to recal my vagrant footsteps to the paths of virtue. But, alas! I know not the resolution of the Greek; I cannot resist the song of the syrens; and, partial as I may be to paternal musick, it will prove, in its influence upon me, far inferiour to their's.

But all is not torpor and inanimation, and what love could not produce, vanity has inspired. Two of the brethren of the house of my Dulcinea made her a visit last week, with a design of turning her from the expectation

of a coronet and from me. I need not tell you that they are honest, simple bourgeois, or they would not have meditated such a fruitless errand to their ambitious sister. I was well assured that they would not convert her, and the fancy came across me to aim at converting them. In this business I so exerted myself in every form of attention, flattery, and amusement, that I verily believe they returned to their home at *Chipping-Norton* without enforcing that remonstrance which was the motive to their journey. That *Chipping-Norton*, in whose neighbourhood I passed with my grandmother many of my youthful days, and to which I had never associated any idea but that of pigs playing upon organs; that chilly *Chipping-Norton* should yield one of its former rosses to be the *Cara sposa* of your friend! What can your fertile fancy deduce from the union of *Hagley's* genius and the widowed protectress of the more than widowed *Leasowes?* If offspring there should be, what a strange demi-Theocrite will owe its being to such an Hymen. Alas! my friend, this is but a dream for your amusement; the reality will offer to your compassionate experience the marriage of infatuation and necessity, whose legitimate and certain is-

sue will be a separate maintenance, and perhaps a titled dowry.

I have many and various communications to make to you, but they must be reserved for personal intercourse. In the mean time, when you shall see me announced as being added to the Benedicks of the year, save me, I beseech you, save me your congratulations. Nothing is so absurd as the tide of felicitations which flow in upon a poor newly-married man, before he himself can determine, and much less the complimenting world, upon the propriety of them. Marriage is the grand lottery of life; and it is as great a folly to exult upon entering into it, as on the purchase of a ticket in the state-wheel of fortune. It is when the ticket is drawn a prize that we can answer to congratulation.——Adieu!

LETTER XXXIV.

MY DEAR — — —,

IF I am not very much mistaken, your library-table is always furnished with an interleaved *Bruyere*, on whose blank pages you amuse yourself with extending the ideas of that celebrated writer, or directing them to modern applications. I am, therefore, to offer my name as an addition to your collections, and to desire that in your *scholia* on that excellent work, I may furnish a *trait* to his admirable character of the absent man.

On the day of my marriage, a day——— but no more of that!—After the nuptial benediction was over, and we were returning to our equipage, instead of being the gallant Benedick, and conducting the new-made Mrs. L— — — to her coach, I slouched on before, and was actually getting into the carriage, as if I had been quite alone; but, recollecting myself as my foot was upon the step, I turned round to make my apology, which com-

pleted the business, for I addressed the bride in her widowed name, with "My dear Mrs. "P——, I beg ten thousand pardons," and so on. This fit of absence was as strange as it proved ridiculous—an omen, perhaps, of all the ungracious business which is to follow.—You may first laugh at this little foolish history, and then, if you please, apply it to a more serious purpose. But this species of absence is an hereditary virtue. A virtue! say you. Yes, Sir, a virtue; for it is a mark of genius; and my Right Honourable father possesses it in a most flattering degree. I will present you with a most remarkable example, which you may also add to the composition of your modern Theophrastus. His Lordship was about to pay a morning sacrifice at the shrine of M———, and a large bunch of early pinks lay upon his toilette, which were to compose the offering of the day. With those antique or professional beaux, who wear the eye of large flowing wig, it appears to be convenient, in the ceremony of their dress, that the head should bring up the rear, and be covered the last. The full-trimmed suit was put on, the sword was girded to his side, the *chapeau bas* was compressed by his left arm, the bunch of pinks graced his right-hand, and his night-cap

remained upon his pate. The servant having left the room, the venerable peer, forgetful of his perukean honours, would actually have sallied forth into the street in full array and *en bonnet de nuit*, if his valet de chambre had not arrived, at the critical moment, to prevent his singular exit. I was present, but my astonishment at his figure so totally suspended my faculties, that he would have made the length of Curzon-street before I should have recovered any power of reflection. I was accused, as you may suspect, of a purposed inattention, in order to render his Lordship ridiculous; and I was told upon the occasion, that, although this kind of occasional absence of mind might furnish folly with laughter, it generally arose from that habitual exertion of thought which produces wisdom. You may congratulate me, therefore, on the prospect of my advancement to the title of sage.

I am already married, and what is to follow God alone knows. Strange things daily happen *dans ce bas monde*, and things more strange may be behind. I have such a budget to open for you!—but that discovery must be reserved till we meet. Suffice it to say at present,

Quædam parva quidem, sed non toleranda maritis.

LETTER XXXV.

I CONGRATULATE you, with no common sincerity, on having got most completely into a scrape from whence all your finesse and prudent demeanour will not be able to extricate you. I have seen you, more than once, venture upon a flight which left my effrontery far behind, while I could not but envy you the advantages which publick prepossession in your favour gave you over me. Frequently have I blasphemed my stars for not having given me the art of saving appearances, which you so eminently possess; but I have now good reason to hope, that you have, at length, fallen from your height, and will be obliged in future to roll in the mire with myself, and a few others of our common nature. The devil, in the language of the proverb, having long owed you a grudge, has taken a very fair opportunity to pay it. You may now exclaim, on your entrance into our Pandæmonium,

> Hail, horrours, hail! and thou, profoundest Hell,
> Receive thy new possessor.

For your consolation, however, I shall inform you, that, before the period of my present incorrigible humour, I was once in a state of disadvantage, very similar, in its circumstances and effects, to that which has now overtaken you. You must know, then, that some years ago I had formed an unlucky plan to mortify my Right Reverend uncle, who had taken some authoritative liberties with me, without giving him a fair opportunity to express his resentment. This was no less than an attack upon the temporal privilege of Episcopacy, in possessing a seat in the House of Lords. I had some thoughts of my own upon the subject, but I had fortunately added to their number and importance from the accidental perusal of a re-published tract on the conduct of our Bishops through upwards of twenty reigns, which unanswerably proved, that, during so long a period, they had almost uniformly manifested themselves to be foes to rational liberty. I took up the argument in a very general view, urged it with modesty, and, what was better, with security, as, in case it had been returned with anger, I was armed with the opinion of my father, who was present, and, in his Persian Letters, has written to the same purpose. In

short, I enjoyed all the triumph that my malicious expectation could have framed. The prelate grinned with vexation, but was forced to acquiesce in silence, and I had my revenge. But, not many days after, when my resentment towards this Reverend Relation had been lost in its fruition, a trifling circumstance happened, which his vigilant anger gladly seized, in order to heap upon me every indignity which his truly christian spirit was capable of producing. As a family party of us were crossing the road on the side of Hagley Park, a chaise passed along, followed by a couple of attendants with French horns. Who can that be? said my father. Some itinerant mountebank, replied I, if one may judge from his musical followers. I really spoke with all the indifference of an innocent mind; nor did it occur to me, that the Right Reverend Father in God, my uncle, had sometimes been pleased to travel with servants accoutred with similar instruments.

But evil on itself will soon recoil;

and my recollection was soon restored to me by a torrent of abuse, which was, in length, violence, and, I had almost said, in expression, equal to any sacred anathema of Popish resentment. In short, I was cursed, damned,

and sent to the Devil, in all the chaste periphrasis of a priest's implacability. The whole of the business was of a very singular nature; he availed himself of an inoffensive occurrence to let loose his resentment at a past offence; while I, in a state of actual innocence, sunk beneath the consciousness of my past guilt. This last part of the story is, I presume, in perfect unison with your present feelings. But, to conclude with a serious observation, be assured, my friend, that, however rich, great, or powerful a man may be, it is the height of folly to make personal enemies from any, but particularly from personal motives: for one unguarded moment—and who could support the horrours of a never-ceasing, suspicious vigilance?—may yield you to the revenge of the most despicable of mankind. From a very unpleasant experience of my own, I should most sincerely counsel every young man, who is entering on the theatre of the world, to merit the good opinion of mankind, by an easy, unaffected, and amiable deportment to all, which will do more to make his walk through life respectable and happy, than those more striking and splendid qualities, which are for ever in the extremes of honour or disgrace.—Adieu. I shall be curi-

ous to hear of the progress you make in the thorny paths of contrition, and whether the fruits of it will be adequate to the humiliating penalties you must have undergone.

I am, with great regard,

Your's, &c.

LETTER XXXVI.

MY DEAR SIR,

I SINCERELY lament with you the death of Dr. Goldsmith, as a very considerable loss to the learned, the laughing, and the sentimental world. His versatile genius was capable of producing satisfaction to persons of all these varying denominations. But I shall, without hesitation, combat the opinion which you derive from the insolvent state in which he died, that genius and talents meet with an ungrateful return from mankind, and are generally seen to struggle with continual and insuperable difficulties. Plautus is related to have turned a mill, Boethius died in a gaol, Tasso was in constant distress, Cervantes died of hunger, and our Otway from too eager an indulgence of that appetite: Camoens ended his days in an hospital, and Vaugelas left his body to the surgeons to pay his debts as far as it would go. I could fill my paper with a melancholy detail of genius in misfor-

tune; but it would require a volume of no common size to examine into the causes of such an affecting branch of human distress: and if a work of that nature were to be composed, it would prove no more than what we already know, that genius is not exempt from human failings, and frequently possesses them in a degree superiour to ordinary talents and common dulness. An improvident spirit and disdain of reflection are no uncommon attributes of that character; and I need not inform a child of ten years old, that the dullest Rosinante, who keeps on his way, will sooner arrive at his destined end, than the fleetest courser of Newmarket, who has taken a different direction.

An unenlightened and barbarous age may deny bread to men of understanding; but we have the happiness to live in the full blaze of reason and knowledge. At this period, the man of genius, as well as the less learned character, is equally the framer of his own fortune; and it must arise from some inherent deficiency in both, when the means of comfortable existence, to say no more, are remote from them. This age is the most favourable that has ever been known in the annals of time, for men of genius, talents, and skill, in

any and every branch of science and art. To come home, however, to your subject, tell me, I beg of you, in what respect Doctor Goldsmith was neglected. As soon as his talents were known, the publick discovered a ready disposition to reward them; nor did he ever produce the fruits of them in vain. His mode of life is generally known; the profits of his labours are no secret; and the patronage, beneath which he, some time, flourished, is a matter of publick notoriety: nor shall I swerve from truth in the declaration, that he was encouraged equal to his merits, whatever they may have been; and that the publick were ready to increase their favour in proportion to his exertions. Ask your book-seller what Doctor Goldsmith did acquire, and what he might have acquired, by his writings: continue the question with respect to the manner in which many of them were produced, and what was the spring which generally set his talents in motion. The respective replies will be sufficient to convince you, that, if your favourite author died in poverty, it was because he had not discretion enough to be rich. A rigid obedience to the scripture command of *Take no thought for to-morrow*, with an ostentatious impatience of coin, and an unre-

flecting spirit of benevolence, occasioned the difficulties of his life, and the insolvency of its end. He might have blessed himself with an happy independence, enjoyed, without interruption, every wish of a wise man, secured an ample provision for his advanced age, if he had attained it, and have made a respectable last will and testament; and all this, without rising up early or sitting up late, if common sense had been added to his other attainments. Such a man is awakened into the exertion of his faculties but by the impulse of some sense which demands enjoyment, or some passion which cries aloud for gratification; by the repeated menace of a creditor, or the frequent dun at his gate: nay, should the necessity of to-day be relieved, the procrastinated labour will wait for the necessity of to-morrow; and, if death should overtake him in the interval, it must find him a beggar, and the age is to be accused of obduracy in suffering genius to die for want! If Pope had been a debauchee, he would have lived in a garret, nor enjoyed the Attick elegance of his villa on the banks of the Thames. If Sir Joshua Reynolds had been idle and drunken, he might, at this hour, have been acquiring a scanty and precarious mainte-

nance by painting coach pannels and Birmingham tea-boards. Had not David Hume possessed the invariable temper of his country, he might have been the actual master of a school in the Hebrides; and the inimitable Garrick, if he had possessed Shuter's character, would have acquired little more than Shuter's fame, and suffered Shuter's end. Name me a man of genius in our days, who, if he has been destitute of independence, had a right to complain of any one but himself. You may tell me that Lloyd died in a gaol; and I believe, from every thing that I have heard of that very ingenious gentleman, that his fate would have been the same, if he had been born to the inheritance of an ample fortune. You will add, perhaps, the name of your very learned friend Morell. He certainly deserves well of, and is esteemed by, the learned world; but the acute critick and profound grammarian seems to be impelled rather by the love of science, than the desire of gain—is generally in the habit of frugal contentment, and hides himself in that shade of retirement, where the learned few alone can find him. I am, however, entirely of your opinion, that he merits a less restrained situation than he possesses; and I agree with

you in not forgiving Doctor B— — for a breach of justice in opposing his election to a fellowship at Eton. Such a promotion would have been a suitable reward for his labours, and have afforded him that ample independence, and learned retreat, which would have left his closing life without a wish. B— — was the most able school-master that ever grasped the birch; and I am sorry he should disgrace his succeeding and higher office, by opposing, as you tell me, more than once, the entrance of a man into his college, the circumstances of whose life and character gave him so fair a claim to the preferment which he solicited. But this ill treatment of your friend—for I think it such—is not applicable to the age, but to the folly of a vain man, who finds a consolation for his disappointed ambition in the despotick sway of a college, wherein he will not suffer a man to enter, whose character announces the least gleam of an independent spirit.

Learning and fine talents must be respected and valued in all enlightened ages and nations; nay, they have been known to awaken a most honourable veneration in the breasts of men accustomed to spoil, and wading through blood to glory. An Italian robber not only

refused the rich booty of a caravan, but conducted it under his safeguard, when he was informed that *Tasso* accompanied it. The great Duke of Marlborough, at the siege of Cambray, gave particular orders, that the lands, &c. of the admired *Fenelon*, Archbishop of the diocese, should not be profaned by the violence of war. Cæsar, the ambitious Cæsar, acknowledged *Tully's* superiour character; for that the Roman orator had enlarged the limits of human knowledge, while *he* had only extended those of his country. But to proceed one step higher,

> The great Emathian Conquerour bid spare
> The House of Pindarus, when Temple and Tow'r
> Went to the ground.

Rest then assured, my friend, when a man of learning and talents does not, in this very remunerative age, find encouragement, protection, and independence, that such an unnatural circumstance must arise from some concomitant failings which render his labours obnoxious, or, at least, of no real utility.—Adieu, my dear Sir. A long letter may admit of excuse on a subject which would fill a large volume.

I am, with truth,
Your faithful, humble servant.

LETTER XXXVII.

INDEED, my dear friend, you mistake the matter: Irony is not my talent, and B—— says I have too much impudence to make use of it. It is a fine rhetorical figure; and if there were a chance of attaining the manner in which Junius has employed it, its cultivation would be worth my attention. But you add an harsh injustice to real errour, when you suppose that I have employed any powers of raillery I may possess on the subject of Her Most Excellent Majesty. I recollect the conversation which produced this report to my disadvantage, and, if it were true, to my dishonour. I can easily despise the malice of those who understand and misrepresent me; but that ignorance which both misunderstands and misrepresents is mortifying in the extreme. I should really think it little less than blasphemy to speak ill of a Princess who deserves so well. The Queen does honour to the British Throne; she has a right to the place she possesses in the breast of every reflecting Englishman; and it

has ever been my opinion, that her character unites the royal virtues of her station with the most amiable qualifications of her sex. Nor have I ever been disposed to speak unfavourably of the ladies who attend her person, or compose her suit. There are, I must own, half a dozen figures of her household who are objects of my pity; and the strain of commiseration which broke from me on their subjects, has been represented, I find, as a contemptuous raillery of their Royal Mistress. My memory will serve me, I believe, to recollect the general tenour of my discourse on the occasion, which I shall offer to your candid interpretation.

The *Dowager Lady Townshend*, as you well know, divides the human species into men, women, and h— —; and where is the crime, if I parody on her ladyship's logick, and apply it to the division of her Majesty's houshold into men, women, and *maids of honour*? Nor will it be difficult to justify this new line of distinction, if we consider the peculiar offices which compose the duty, and the singular privileges which reward the service, of these courtly virgins.

To make up, at least, two court suits in a year; to dance as many court minuets in the

same space; to sidle, on days of duty, through the presence-chambers, at the tail of a royal procession; to take her place in an established corner of the drawing-room; to say yes, Sir, or no, Sir, and courtesy, when she is noticed by the King; to say yes, Madam, and no, Madam, and courtesy, when the Queen does her the same honour; to make an occasional one of six large hoops in a royal coach, and to aid the languor of an easy party in a side-box at a royal play; compose the principal labours of a maid of honour's life. But they are not without their rewards. A moderate salary, and a thousand pounds when Miss gets an husband; an apartment in a palace, and I believe a dinner from a royal kitchen; in the rotation of six weeks, a seven days' possession of a royal coach, a royal coachman, and a shabby pair of royal horses, for the purpose of shopping in the city, paying distant visits, airing in the King's road, and the being set down at the very gate of Kensington Gardens, while women of the first fashion are obliged to trip it o'er an hundred yards of greensward between their coaches and the place of admittance; to take place of Baronets' daughters; to go to plays, operas, and oratorios, gratis; to have physicians without fees, and medi-

cines without an apothecary's bill; to chat with Lords and grooms of the bed-chamber around the fire of an anti-chamber; to stroke the beardless face of a new-made page; and, perhaps, to receive an Heir-Apparent's first effort at flirtation; constitute the various privileges of a maid of honour.

This brief history, my dear friend, you well know to be founded in fact, and will, therefore, be ready to applaud the tender pity I feel for these virgin automatons. I have never seen them bringing up the rear of a royal train, but each of them has appeared to bear, in legible characters, on her forehead, *Who will marry me?* Nevertheless, upon the most favourable average, not one in three years, during the present reign, has been rewarded by Hymen; which, in their particular situation, is as pitiable a circumstance as can be found in the long catalogue of female mortifications. A lady of the bed-chamber is obliged only to a partial duty; and, during the short period of her attendance, is, in some degree, the companion of her royal Mistress; while the virgins of honour are not admitted, as I have been informed, to stick a pin in a royal handkerchief. Even the women of the same department figure only in her Majesty's cast-off

gowns on royal birth-days; but these poor persecuted damsels are the common hackneys of drawing-room parade: whether ill or well, in humour or out of humour, by day-light or by candle-light, they are obliged, through three parts of the year, to be on the continual stretch of state-official exhibition.

I remember, when I was little more than a boy, to have seen a young lady in training for this important office; and the whole of that serious business consisted in nothing more than a practical lecture upon entrances and exits, the language of courtisies, and the art of conducting a large hoop in all modes and forms of possible pliancy. I laughed then as boys laugh, and had some unlucky thoughts in my head which were not arrived at maturity: at this period, I would willingly give an opera-subscription to be present at a similar exercise.

After this manner did I treat the honourable subject of her Majesty's honourable virgins; and little did I think that it would beget a long admonitory epistle from you, to warn me against speaking evil of dignities. My wit, such as it is, has never directed a single glance at the Throne; and I have received the welcome testimony of your applause, more than

once, for exerting the full force of my understanding to support the wishes of it. You have my ready leave, my dear friend, to laugh with me, and at me—to reprove and to admonish me; but I must entreat you to relax your proneness to believe every idle tale which is fabricated to my dishonour.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

YOUR usual accuracy has failed you in your suggestions concerning the rise and rapid progress of Mr. D— —t's fortune. The history of that gentleman's advancement to his present affluence, if my immediate recollection does not fail me, is as follows.

That he was appointed to his first employment in the service of government by my father's interest is true; and it may, perhaps, have been procured for him from the motives which current opinion has assigned: but of this I do not pretend to be better informed than the rest of the world. Thus placed in a situation of little or no leisure, he was left, I believe, by our family-patronage, to look for any future promotion from his own industry, the chance of succession, or the casual boon of fortune. The latter was disposed to smile upon him, or, it may be said with more propriety, to reward the prudent modesty with which he retreated from her first advances, to secure her greater favours. In the usual

course of promotion, he had an acknowledged claim to succeed to a vacant place of no inconsiderable profit. On this occasion, Lord Holland, for some particular reason which I have forgotten, or perhaps never heard, wished to make an irregular appointment in favour of some other person; and, to comply with his Lordship's wishes, Mr. D—— wisely waved his right of succession. That Nobleman, who never suffered a good office to be long unreturned, soon after procured him to be named Commissary-General to the expedition then preparing to attack the French West-India Islands. The success which attended it, together with the regular profits of his appointment, placed him in a situation, with respect to fortune, with which, it may be imagined, he was more than satisfied; and I have been told that he then looked no farther. But Lord Holland never thought he did enough for any one that had obliged him; and I am greatly mistaken, if his influence did not name Mr. D—— to the same employment in the formidable armament which was sent against the Havannah, and succeeded. The fortunes acquired by that capture are well known, and Mr. D—— ——t's was among the largest of them. On his return to England, he soon began to

display a love of ostentation, which he indulged, however, as I understand, without injuring his fortune; for though George has no small share of vanity, it has seldom operated so far as to make him inattentive to the *summum bonum* of life. He built a fine house in Portman-square, and purchased the very capital estate of Tong-Castle, in Shropshire, of the Duke of Kingston. He immediately renewed, or rather improved, the ancient form of the decayed edifice, adorned with the venerable decorations of Gothick architecture, beautified its surrounding lawns, and conducted through them a long extent of fine water, which flows on three sides of the stately edifice. The castle is a very large building, contains many very capacious apartments, and is furnished with a profusion of pictures and splendid upholstery. Though it is not situated in a fine part of the country, yet, taken in all its circumstances, it may lay no small claim to the character of magnificence. The owner of it might have built a new and more commodious house for much less money than has been expended in the reparations of the old one: but the word *castle* is a sounding word; it was in unison with Mr. D— —t's notions of grandeur; and, apprehensive that

this favourite title might, by degrees, be forgotten with the lofty turrets and stately battlements, he resolved to clothe them in more than pristine grandeur, and thus secure their ancient, honourable name, till time or chance should destroy them for ever. Some of my old neighbours positively assert, that they remember to have heard George D—— declare, when he was a youth, that he hoped, one day or other, to be possessed of a larger house than *Hagley*; and they insist upon it that he gives such great extent to the limits of *Tong-Castle*, merely to fulfil his own prediction. But this by the way—the world in general, who are not acquainted with the ambition of his early days, have thought, that by this creation of splendour, he hoped to allure some lady of noble birth and great connexions to become the mistress of it. The bait offered by so handsome a man as he certainly is, would, in all probability, have been soon taken, but, in this particular, expectation has been very much disappointed; for he has actually made a kind of half-runaway match with a little Quaker of eighteen years of age, and educated in all the rigour of her sect. She has no pretensions to beauty—I write merely from information—but possesses

a very agreeable person, with a most amiable simplicity, and loves her husband to idolatry. I have heard your friend, Counsellor Day, speak in high terms of her father, as a man of excellent understanding, polite manners, and generous dispositions. Since this marriage, the superb service of plate very seldom makes its appearance; and the master of the noble castle, as I am told, now lives in a corner of it, with a small party of his relations, and seems to be growing into a disregard of the intrigues and fashions of publick life. His brother is the parson of my parish, and is called *Doctor John*; but the Divine and the Squire do not hold a very friendly intercourse.

I rather think that this little piece of biography is pretty well founded: if, however, it should possess any errours, which may be the case, I beg leave to assure you that they are not of my invention. As to Mr. D— —t's unpopularity with the *Lyttleton* family, it does not arise, perhaps, from what you and the world may, with some reason, suppose; but from a subsequent circumstance, of which you, and the world, are, in general, ignorant. When my — — was Governour of J— — —, he received positive orders to raise and

discipline a regiment of Negroes for the service of the Havannah expedition. As this supply did not join the grand armament at the time appointed, Mr. D——t was dispatched to Jamaica, by the Commander in Chief, to chide the tardy levies; and, as report says, he found a very surprizing languor in obeying these very important orders of government. On such an occasion, he was, perhaps, instructed to threaten an accusation of delinquency against the Governour to the powers at home; and it is equally probable, that he did not forget his instructions. Whether this neglect was repaired by subsequent exertions, or whether it was forgotten in the successes which followed, I do not know; but I very well remember, that, at the time, my father was very uneasy about it and complained, in angry terms, to the clergyman of Hagley, of his brother's forwardness to disgrace a branch of that family by which his own had been so warmly protected. Here the matter rested; but that George D——t should have been elevated to a situation, wherein he could repeat what was called an insolent menace to one of the *Lyttleton* family, will never be remembered without much mortification, and, therefore, can never be forgiven.——Adieu!

LETTER XXXIX.

MUCH of the disputes, and consequently many of the inconveniencies, of this world, arise from the strange difficulty (for a strange one it is) that men find in understanding each other's meaning. Hence the never-ending game of cross-purposes, in which all of us, at times, are so much engaged. A leading cause of this disunion is a negligence in using terms appropriate to their object. The philosopher, it is true, must generalize his ideas to compass the views of his enquiring mind. It is by such an application of his intellectual faculties, that he surmounts such a variety of obstacles; that he passes from individual man to an whole people; from a people, to the human race; from the time in which he lives, to the ages that are to come; from what he sees to that which is invisible. But in conveying the fruits of his study and reflection to others, he must condescend to weigh words, compare terms, and preclude all possibility of errour in those he instructs,

by using a simplicity of definition, a perspicuity of expression, and, where the barrenness of language denies the immediate term, a neatness of periphrase which not only invites but creates conception.

You are pleased, in your last letter, to charge the present age with the crime of skepticism; and you have abandoned yourself to a more than common energy on the subject. To tell you the truth, I do not very clearly perceive the tendency of your accusation. If it alludes to religion, you would, I think, find some difficulty to maintain your position: if it should glance at politicks, our national submission is certainly against you: or, leaving the higher concerns of the world, if you should apply your assertion to the ordinary intercourse and common transactions between man and man, you are truly unfortunate, as an extreme cullibility seems to be one of the leading features of the present times. The age in which we live does not possess so great a share, as former centuries, of that faith which is able to remove mountains: blind credulity, by the insults it so long offered to reason, has in a great measure destroyed itself, or is rather become modified into that sobriety of belief which is con-

sistent with a rational being. The gaudy, awful, and presuming phantom of Papal authority, has long begun to disappear: that blazing meteor, which for so many ages dazzled the superstitious world, verges towards the horizon, and grows pale before the steady, embodied light of liberal, unimpeded science. But I cannot believe, although luxury and dissipation with their concomitant depravities have made such enormous strides among the higher orders, that infidelity in religious matters is a leading characteristick of our times. If we turn from the church to the state, the firm confidence of a very great majority of the people in a government, which, I am forced to confess, does not possess all the wisdom that such a government ought to possess, is a circumstance, which, were I to enlarge upon it, you would be perplexed to answer. In the ordinary transactions of life, the wantonness of commercial credit is well prepared to give the lie direct to any charge of incredulity. Ask *Foley*, *Charles Fox*, and a thousand others, what they think of modern infidelity; and they will tell you, that the *Jews* themselves, that unbelieving race, have deserted from the standard of skepticism, and, having borne the stigma of spiritual unbelief,

for upwards of seventeen hundred years, are at this moment groaning beneath the effects of temporal credulity.

Credula turba sumus—We are a credulous race of beings; and the most steady professors of skepticism are deceived by others, and deceive themselves, every hour of the day. Religion, which commands, among its evident truths, the belief of matters which we cannot entirely comprehend, will sometimes so habituate the mind of its submissive disciple to acts of faith, that he does not know how to withhold his assent to the most improbable fictions of human fancy; and the *Credo quia impossibile est* of *Tertullian* is readily adopted by his yielding piety. I shall confirm the truth of this observation by a story which I have heard related, and is not more extraordinary in its nature than the tone, look, and language of belief which accompanied the relation. A traveller, benighted in a wild and mountainous country, (if my recollection does not fail me, in the Highlands of Scotland,) at length beholds the welcome light of a neighbouring habitation. He urges his horse towards it; when, instead of an house, he approached a kind of illuminated chapel, from whence issued the most alarming

sounds he had ever heard. Though greatly surprised and terrified, he ventured to look through a window of the building, when he was amazed to see a large assembly of cats, who, arranged in solemn order, were lamenting over the corpse of one of their own species, which lay in state, and was surrounded with the various emblems of sovereignty.—Alarmed and terrified at this extraordinary spectacle, he hastened from the place with greater eagerness than he approached it; and arriving, some time after, at the house of a gentleman who never turned the wanderer from his gate, the impressions of what he had seen were so visible on his countenance, that his friendly host enquired into the cause of his anxiety. He accordingly told his story, and, having finished it, a large family cat, who had lain, during the narrative, before the fire, immediately started up, and very articulately exclaimed, "*Then I am King of the Cats!*" and, having thus announced its new dignity, the animal darted up the chimney and was seen no more.

Now, the man, who *seriously* repeated this strange and singular history, was a peer of the realm, had been concerned in the active scenes of life, and was held in high esteem

and veneration among mankind for his talents, wisdom, and Christian piety. After this information, which I give you as a serious fact, what have you to say? It is impossible but you must immediately withdraw your charge of infidelity against a period which could produce one such implicit believer.

As for myself, I will readily confess to you that I am neither a skeptick nor a believer.—I have enough of skepticism to prevent the throwing my share of faith away: at the same time I feel within me that there is something, which I cannot very well explain, the belief whereof I ought to cultivate, and from whence I should derive much satisfaction and contentment, could I but frame my mind to the purpose. If, however, after all my reasoning, you should still continue to fix a skeptical character upon the present age, I trust that you will at least discard it from your own breast, while I assure you of the great regard with which I am

Your most sincere, humble servant.

LETTER XL.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR letters to me are those of friendship. Under the impression of this sentiment, I at all times receive them: nevertheless, they are attended with this disagreeable circumstance, that, in my answers to them, I am so often obliged to make myself the hero of my own tale.

Your last charge has a foundation in truth; and the persons whom you name as being in the circle of my intimacy, are received at my house, and admitted to my table. You tell me it is not only a dishonour, but a crime, to herd with such men as familiar associates; and that it is beneath a rational being to receive these outcasts from all other society into mine, merely to be flattered by their submission, to have base engines of my pleasures, or objects for that raillery which will not be returned.—It is too true that I cannot altogether combat the force of these very severe observations;

but let me persuade you to bestow a small portion of your leisure on the volume of human nature, to take a short review of human failings, and then to cast your eye upon that page whereon my name is written. You will there discover that my character is divided between an ardent desire of applause, and a more than equal love of pleasure; and, on this discovery, your considerate regard will look with less severity upon me. When you have done me this justice, proceed, I beseech you, one step farther; examine the world upon my subject, and you will know what confirmed prejudices it possesses against me; that I am the continual victim of its injustice; and that, not contented to blazon forth my defects and follies into a false, unnatural magnitude, it seems pleased with the malignant task of fabricating tales to my dishonour. Publick opinion aims at excluding me from a familiar intercourse with men of virtuous life, and women of chaste manners: so that, when I appear even in general societies, mothers seem to be alarmed for their daughters, husbands for their wives, and fathers for their sons: nay, the very *impures* of the town have refused my most generous offers, from an apprehension of my capacity for mischief. I will freely own that my life

has been marked with an extravagance of dissipation; but neither the force of my passions, &c. nor their success, though, viciously speaking, I might be vain of the latter, can justify these violent and continual fears of me.

But let us suppose for a moment, that this most prodigal of all prodigals should meditate a reformation, and begin the salutary work with the favourable omen of shutting his doors against those vagabonds, to use your own expression, whom you accuse him of suffering to enter them. If, in the arduous task of winning the forfeited esteem of mankind, I should begin with paying my court to the lights of the church, and beg their sanction to my infant repentance, those holy men would not only suspect the sincerity of my declarations, but do my effrontery the credit to believe, that, under the semblance of contrition, I was meditating some unholy impertinence to the sacred Lawn. Permit me to continue the singular idea, and suppose me commencing my round of episcopal visits with one of the FIRST CHARACTERS of this age and nation, the present *Bishop of London.* After some hesitation on the part of my coachman, you may imagine me at his Lordship's gate, where it cannot be supposed that I should find ad-

mittance. But this is not all. Mrs. *Lowth* would probably throw my visiting card into the fire, and forbid the porter to enter my name in his book; while the Right Reverend Prelate would determine to take the opportunity of some debate in the House of Lords, wherein I might be engaged, to satisfy his politeness as a gentleman, by leaving his name at my door, without any apprehension of being admitted within it. What! would you have me wander a solitary being through the world, too bad for the good, and too good for the bad? My whole nature shudders at the idea, and I should perish in the attempt. I love superiority, flattery, and ease; and the society which you condemn affords the threefold gratification. You will tell me that it consists of dishonourable men: in the common sense of the term you may be right; but *dulcibus abundant vitiis;* and, as bad instruments, in the hands of agreeable performers, make a pleasant concert, so these characters compose an amusing society. With them I am under no restraint: they know the history of the day: some of them, also, are well accomplished; and, while they play upon one another, I can play upon them all. Besides, coffee may be ordered at whatever hour I please without an

opposing look; and while I confer honour, I enjoy convenience.

You will, perhaps, be disposed to enquire if I think it worthy of me, in the phrase of vulgar tongues, to enjoy the character of *king of the company*. The love of rule, my dear sir, is, more or less, the inmate of every breast: it is allied to all the pre-eminent virtues, and the greatest men have owed their greatness to it. *Cæsar* declared that the first office of a village was preferable to the second station in the Roman world. *Whitefield*, I believe, would not have exchanged his tabernacle for a metropolitan diocese; *Zinzendorff*, amid the submission of his *Moravian* followers, looked down with pity on despotick empire; nor, in the government of my *pandæmonium*, do I envy all the didactick honours of your *lyceum*.

It may be an opinion which proceeds from a dissolute refinement, but it is mine—that pleasure is not pleasure, if difficulties are necessary to its enjoyment. I wish, as it were, to have it brought home to me, without my stirring across the threshhold. My taste for gratification is like their piety who erect chapels in their houses: it makes a domestick priesthood necessary to me; and, while the persons who compose it are zealous in their

functions, I shall look no farther. The circumstances of my past life have produced the colour of the present moment; a future period may receive another hue. The events of every passing hour, in characters such as mine, as well as in others which are supposed to be much better, must furnish the tints. Experience may do something in my favour; your friendly oracles may do more; the calls of publick duty may have their effect. To conclude, *time and chance happen unto all men*: and, through their influence, the hour may arrive when prelates will eat my soup without fear of contamination, and modest women admit me to their society without apprehending a loss of reputation. Do not be angry with me, I beseech you; it is impossible to treat the subject otherwise: and, if I might add another petition to the many you have already so kindly granted, let me entreat you to give our correspondence a more pleasing and profitable subject, than the failings of

Your very sincere,
and obliged, &c.

LETTER XLI.

THE world at large is so disposed to generalise, that it is seldom right when it descends into the detail of opinion. It has so many eyes and objects, that, in the act of particularising the sources of its favour or disapprobation, the rectitude or errour of its conclusions are both the effect of hazard. I, as you too well know, have been the subject of its severest censure; but, with all my faults, I have much reason to complain of its precipitate injustice.

Among other instances of its premature indisposition towards me, the circumstance to which you have alluded with so much humour, is in proof of my assertion; and, to heighten my mortification at that time, my own family joined the popular cry: so that, in pronouncing all possibility of amendment, the devoted prodigal was driven to a situation which absolutely precluded him from it.

My father, in a long detail of my unworthiness, which, with his usual tenderness, he

dealt forth to *Harry de Salis*, as a climax to the amiable history, concluded the list of my enormities with declaring that I actually intrigued with three different women of fashion at one and the same time. Without making any comment on the very creditable account given of me, and the favourable picture which his pious Lordship displayed of our first-rate females, permit me to assure you, that neither my prowess with the ladies, nor any foolish, unworthy deed of mine occasioned the paternal displeasure of that moment. The subject of an occasional morning's reading was the true, but unacknowledged cause of my disgrace. I shall do myself the justice of relating the fact to you in all its circumstances.

You must have heard of the celebrated skeptical writer *Claude Anet*. His works, and the prosecution which they brought upon him, have conspired to give his name no small share of publick notoriety. It will be also necessary to inform you, that, after the sacred writings, Lord L—— has directed his partial estimation to two popular theological productions. The one details, explains, and observes upon the resurrection of Christ; and the other defends the character and conduct of the apostle Paul. The former was written by his

dearly beloved friend Mr. *West*—the latter, by *himself*. The infidel *Claude Anet*, among other matters, thought proper to give these two publications a particular and separate consideration. He had the abominable impudence to declare, that they were not only deficient in their principles, but that they were logically defective in the means they took to support them: nay, he undertakes to give them arguments superiour to any they have used, and then to confute them. On this ground he opens his battery, and makes his attack; nor is he without his partizans among men of learning and talents, as I have been informed, who do not hesitate to assign him the victory. Of this I do not pretend to determine—I have, in truth, no genius for that line of criticism. The mode of proceeding, however, must be acknowledged to have been accompanied with an air of insolence and contempt, which might have been the cause of mortification to men of a less sensible fibre than one, at least, of those, against whom it was directed. It had this effect in the extreme: for the pity of the Christian gave way to the pride of the author; and the damnable skeptick, instead of being the object of fervent prayer that he might be converted from

the errour of his way, was wafted, in a moment, by his pious antagonist, to the howling portion of the devil and his angels.

In an unlucky hour it was discovered, that this offensive volume was in my possession, and the subject of my occasional meditation; and from hence arose that unexpected burst of displeasure that fell with so much weight upon me, and which had instant recourse to my graceless life, as the pretended reason for its justification. I do not know a quality of the human mind that is of such an absorbent nature as vanity: in one disappointed moment it will suck up the virtue of years. If *Claude Anet* had levelled his shafts in a different direction, or I had encreased my caution in tracing their course, I might have intrigued with an whole seraglio of women of fashion, without drawing down upon me an atom of that vengeance of which I was the victim. I could not tell the true cause, as it would have increased, if possible, the irritation against me, without doing any good; and, besides, my authority would have been lighter than a feather, in the publick opinion, when put in competition with the power that persecuted me: for, religious opinions apart, the whole was an abominable persecution.

I never felt so sensibly the inconvenience of a bad character as at this period. Impudence could do but little; hypocrisy, which is so thick a garb for half mankind, was not a veil of gauze to me; and, as for repentance, that was not in the reach of ordinary credibility. I was really in the situation of the *Quaker's dog*, who, being caught in the fact of robbing the pantry, was told, in all the complacency of revenge, by his amiable master, "I will not beat thee, nor kill thee, "for thy thieving; but I will do worse, for I "will give thee a *bad name*;" and immediately, on driving him from the house, alarmed the neighbourhood with the calm assurance that he was a *mad dog*: so that the poor animal was pursued with the unreflecting brutality usual on such occasions, which soon put an end to his existence. You may truly apply this story to

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER XLII.

YOU must confess, as I am sure you very well know, that one of the great arts, if not the principal one, in acquiring a reputation, as well as preserving it, is to know the extent of our genius, what objects are most suitable to it, in what track its propensities should be conducted, and at what point to place the limits beyond which it must venture with caution, as well as the *ne plus ultra*, whose barriers it must not venture to pass. The man who possesses this knowledge, and acts according to the dictates of it, will not fail to make a respectable figure in any station, and with any talents; but in an high station, and great talents, he may be secure of familiarizing his name with future ages.

Ambition, an ardent and specious child of self-love, continually urges men to pursue objects beyond their reach. Avarice, an horrid, unnatural cub of the same origin, and a disgrace to it, takes a track which reason disdains, and honour must condemn, to satisfy

its desires. Envy delights itself in obstructing the prosperous career of others; and folly, dreaming of what it cannot possess, will aim at the wreath of wisdom. In short, an ignorance of ourselves, from whatever cause it may proceed, whether from passion or want of reflection, is the origin of all our mistakes in private as well as publick life. In the former, the mischief may be of narrow extent; but, in the latter, the evil may affect, not only a people, but every quarter of the globe. The grand source of that glory which shone, and will continue to shine, with resplendent lustre on Mr. *Pitt's* administration of this country, till the annals of it are no more, was a right application of means to ends, and, among others, of employing men according to the nature and tendency of their characters and talents. You must perceive the drift of my argument; that it leads to the defence of my publick political conduct since I have succeeded to my office in the constitution. You tell me of application to business, and of throwing aside a golden sinecure as disgraceful to a real patriot. You counsel me, in the most flattering manner, to claim an arduous post of government, and, by a vigilant attention to its duties, to make a better return for the emolu-

ments of office, than half a dozen flowery orations in parliament, during a winter's session, which are, in your opinion, sufficiently rewarded by the gratifications of my own vanity. This, I must acknowledge, is coming at once, and without ceremony, to the point; but think for a moment, and ask yourself, what kind of figure I should make at the desk. Can you imagine that it is in my nature, and, of course, in my capacity, to bear the oppression of such multifarious and eternal business as must claim the attention of an eminent official statesman? The admirable structure of the British constitution, its commerce, its interests, and its alliances, have been the objects of my serious enquiry and attentive consideration. I take continual occasion to watch the changing scene of its political movements: I form, with much thought, my opinions upon them: I deliver those opinions, in my senatorial capacity, to the world; not from the suggestions of a giddy hour, or from the spur of momentary vanity, but from curious research, ardent reflection, and deliberate preparation. To this point, my talents, such as they are, must be directed; and, by having given them in some degree their natural direction, I have acquired a political reputation, which would

be lost in contempt and derision, were they to be employed in the routine of official employment, and the perplexities of ministerial duty. Besides, if there be any thing which requires a more than vestal's vigilance, it is the guidance of a principal wheel in the machine of our government; and such a continual attention is foreign to my nature. I might, perhaps, possess it for a certain time, and apply it with zeal; may I not add, with reputation? But my existence would be insupportable, if the intervals of relaxation did not frequently relieve me, when I might retire

> To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
> Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair.

There is a certain degree of phlegm absolutely necessary to the well-being of society; but I possess not an atom of it. There is also an ardour of mind that leads to national as well as personal greatness, nor am I without an active flame of it; but it burns by flashes, and possesses me only in common with other contending passions, which, in their turn, command my obedience, and are obeyed. Suffer the stream, I beseech you, to flow in those channels which nature has designed for it: let it pass on sometimes in foaming eddies, and sometimes with a tranquil wave: be content

to watch its progress; and, though it may now force its angry passage through the divided mountain, your eye may soon behold its crystal surface reflect the golden harvests and flowery meadows. But, should its natural course be changed, it would be quickly lost in bog and morass; nor ever grow into that extent and grandeur of waters which many rivulets attain before they reach the ocean.

Is there not, in my own family, an immediate circumstance of ridicule which comes in aid of my argument? My father, who made a respectable figure as a senator, in both Houses of Parliament, and possessed that theoretick political erudition which constituted him an able counsellor of the state, was incapable, as you very well know, of *counting twenty pounds*, if thrown in a promiscuous heap of the different British coins: nevertheless, he was appointed to preside at the Exchequer, to contrive ways and means, and to run through the combinations of finance, without the knowledge of arithmetick which is necessary to an overseer of the poor. And what was the consequence? The whole nation was upon the titter during his short-lived administration; nor does any visitor of *Hagley House* pass through the room which is adorned with the

Exchequer strong-box, but beholds the empty badge and sad memorial of his ministerial honours with a significant look of wonder, or shrug of disapprobation.

The sage physician endeavours to meliorate, but not to change, the constitution of his patient, and infuses, by degrees, those wholesome aids which may help to lessen its infirmities. The same wise conduct should be pursued in the care of mental health; and to aim at turning the natural bent of genius is an application of moral quackery, which will destroy all fervour of ability, administer an opiate to the faculties of mind, bring on apathy and torpour, and destroy all intellectual nerve for ever.

Adieu, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

I TAKE the opportunity of a sober hour, while every one of the society here, except myself, is happy in the delirium of a fox-chase, to tell you where I am, what I am about, and with whom engaged. The spleen of a gloomy day seized upon my spirits; so I ordered my chaise, and sought the enlivening hospitality of this mansion. To increase our satisfaction, who should arrive an hour after me but your clerical friend, whose blunt simplicity and unpolished benevolence afforded their usual entertainment. *Parson Adams*—for he has no other name within these walls—came on Thursday to dinner, and continued with us, in much joy of heart, till Saturday afternoon; when, suddenly awaking from a kind of snoring doze, he made a most vociferous and unexpected demand if it was not the last day of the week; and receiving, after some pause of astonishment and laughter, an answer in the affirmative, he arose in haste, examined his pockets with a most anxious vi-

vacity, and then broke the cordage of the bell, in the violence of ringing it. Being requested to explain the meaning of all this agitation, he observed, in a tone of voice which betokened no small disappointment, that as, in truth, it was Saturday, the morrow must, in the natural order of time, be Sunday; and as Sunday was the Sabbath-day, it was fitting he should immediately return home, to prepare himself for the duties of it. The night approached and threatened darkness; it was, therefore, proposed to him to retake the possession of his arm-chair, nor to think of business till the next morning. "My "good friends," replied the Doctor, "it be-"comes me to inform you, that my habita-"tion is fourteen miles distant, and that the "church, where I am to officiate to-morrow "morning, is exactly in the mid-way; so that, "if I remain here till the time you propose, "I must ride fourteen miles to fetch a ser-"mon, return seven of the same miles to "preach it, and then go over these individual "seven miles for the third time to preach the "same sermon again, which I take, accord-"ing to common arithmetick, to be no less "than twenty-eight miles; and all this riding, "with double duty, will be too much both

" for man and beast. I really thought," continued our Divine, " that I had equipped my-
" self with a sermon, in order to make the
" first church an half-way house on my re-
" turn to my own parish; but I have either
" forgot to clap my divinity in my pocket, or
" I took it out accidentally with my tobacco-
" box in my way, and have unfortunately
" dropped it in the road." He then emptied all his pockets one by one, not forgetting the side-pocket of his breeches, turned them inside out, covered the floor with a quanity of dry crumbs of bread and cheese, looked into his tobacco-box, took his watch from his fob, poked down two of his fingers, examined the lining of his coat, and, at length, with a deep sigh, and an huge expectoration upon his handkerchief, which he had thrown upon the ground, he gave it up for lost. " It was" said he, " the best discourse I had to my back, and
" as pretty a piece of supernaculum as ever
" was enclosed in black covers. It was divid-
" ed," continued he, " into three parts; the
" first was taken from *Clarke*, the second from
" *Abernethy*, and the third was composed by
" myself; and the two practical observations
" were translated from a Latin sermon preach-
" ed and printed at Oxford, in the year of our

"Lord 1735." On my observing that his discourse had as many heads as *Cerberus*, he grew warm, and told me it was much better to have three heads than none at all. "But," added the Doctor, "if you wish to know more "of the matter, it had four beginnings, and "seven conclusions; by the help whereof I "preached it, with equal success, on a Christ-"mas-day, for the benefit of a charity, at a "florist's feast, an assize, an arch-deacon's "visitation, and a funeral, besides common "occasions." On this account, F—— observed that it put him in mind of the mention made, in *Tristram Shandy*, of a text which would suit any sermon, and a sermon which would suit any text. This the zealous preacher loudly declared was a false insinuation; for that his text was steady to its post, nor had ever deserted it; and that whoever took him for a man who would hold out a false flag, or change his colours, on any occasion, mistook his character, and did him a very sensible injustice. At this period, the master of the house returned from a quiet but fruitless examination of his book-case, for the purpose of finding, perchance, some old printed sermon which might have served the Doctor's purpose, prolonged the pleasure of his socie-

ty, and saved him his dark and dangerous journey. On this disappointment, I ventured to remark, that, as he had given us so many agreeable specimens of his ready eloquence, it was certainly in his power to treat his flock with an extempore discourse; and I strongly recommended him to adopt my idea, when he struck me dumb, by hinting to me, in a loud significant whisper, that I was mistaken in supposing it to be as easy a business to preach a sensible discourse on a divine subject, extempore, in a pulpit, as to talk a precipitate hour of flowery, frothy nonsense, on a political one, in the Parliament House. At this moment of superiority his horse was announced, and we all attended to hear, rather than to see him depart, which he did with much horse language, and in a night of triple darkness.

It was now seven o'clock; our spirits were fled with the parson: we gambled a little, but not with sufficient spirit to keep us awake, till at length supper fortunately arrived to change the scene; and I had scarce dissected the wing of a capon, when we were all alarmed by a voice from the court, which repeated the cry of "house! house!" with uncommon vehemence. We left the table and

hurried to the hall-door, when the same voice demanded, in the same tone, whether that was the road to *Bridgenorth*? On a reply in the negative, it continued, "I suppose, then, "I am at *Davenport House*." On a second reply in the negative, "Then where the devil am I?" returned the voice, for we could see nothing; but the candles arriving, who should appear but our unfortunate Doctor, who, after wandering about the commons for upwards of three hours, had, by mere chance, returned to us again. We received him in triumph, placed him at the head of the table, where, without grace or apology, or indeed uttering a single word, he seized on the best part of a fowl, with a proportionable quantity of ham, and left us to laugh and be merry, while he voraciously devoured his meat, and held his tongue. At length, observing that his clay wanted moistening, and that punch was a fluid the best adapted of any other to his soil, he did not delay an instant to quench his thirsty frame from a large bowl of that refreshing beverage. The cords of his tongue were now loosened, and he informed us, that Providence, having, as he supposed, for wise and good purposes, intimated to him, by a variety of obstructions, that he should not dis-

charge his usual functions on the morrow, it became him to shew a due resignation to the will of Heaven, and, therefore, he should send his flocks to grass on the approaching Sabbath. In a similar strain he continued to entertain us, till, wearied with laughter, we were glad to retire. The next morning it was hinted to him that the company did not wish to restrain him from attending upon the divine service of the parish: but he declared that it would be adding contempt to neglect, if, when he had absented himself from his own churches, he should go to any other. This curious etiquette he strictly observed; and we passed a Sabbath, contrary, I fear, both to law and gospel.

In the fulness of his heart, our divine has given us an invitation to dine with him at his parsonage on Thursday next. I expect infinite entertainment from the party; and you may depend, by the succeeding post, to receive the best hash of it which the cookery of my pen can afford you. In the mean time, and at all times, I remain

Your's most affectionately.

LETTER XLIV.

THE visit is paid, and more than answered the warmest expectations which could be formed in its favour. Our Reverend Host had insisted, not *a la mode de Scarron*, that each of his guests should bring his dish, but that they should individually name it. This easy preliminary was readily complied with, and it was my lot to give birth to as excellent a plumb-pudding as ever smoked upon a table; which, from my adoption, he is resolved, in future, to call a *Lyttleton*. You see what honours wait upon me, and to what solid excellence my title is assimilated. F—— had named a goose, which he immediately christened after its godfather, who did not quite relish the joke, and could hardly force a laugh, when the rest of the company were bursting. The whole meal was a very comfortable one; and the Doctor produced us no small quantity of very tolerable wine: his punch was grateful to the nostrils; but he had made it in a large pewter vessel, so like a two

handled chamber-pot, that my resolution was not equal to the applying of it to my palate.

On its being observed that he must have taken no small pains to procure all the good things before us, he declared that no trouble had attended any one article but the pudding, which, he said, had almost destroyed a pair of black plush breeches, in riding round the country to learn how it should be made in perfection. "You cannot be ignorant, my Lord," continued our Divine, addressing himself particularly to me, "that a plumb-pudding is no-
"thing more than a pudding, however it may
"be composed, with plumbs added to the oth-
"er ingredients; but, apprehensive that the
"ordinary skill of our homely kitchens, in this
"particular, might not be agreeable to such
"refined palates as your's, I resolved to trav-
"erse the whole neighbourhood in order to
"obtain all necessary intelligence. Every
"learned person, to whom I applied, agreed,
"as your Lordship may suppose, in the es-
"sential articles of flour and water, milk and
"eggs, suet and plumbs, or raisins; but the
"variety of other articles, which were seve-
"rally recommended, filled two pages of my
"memorandum-book, and drove me almost to
"despair. In the multitude of counsellors, I

"did not, according to the proverb, find wis-
"dom, but confusion. I was successively, al-
"ternately, and separately advised the addi-
"tion of rum, brandy, wine, strong beer, spices
"of every sort, chopped liver, and Holland's
"gin. With this load of multifarious intelli-
"gence, I hastened to the market town, fur-
"nished myself with every ingredient my own
"little store-house did not possess, and return-
"ed home jaded, fatigued, and my pockets lad-
"en with the produce of all quarters of the
"globe. But another important labour," added the Doctor, "succeeded in the consultation a-
"bout the choice and due mode of applying the
"hoard of grocery and variety of liquors which
"were displayed in form on the kitchen dres-
"ser: it was a solemn business, for *the Lord*
"*had commanded it.* Consultation, however,
"begot difference of opinion, and difference of
"opinion brought on dispute; so that I was
"at length obliged to interpose my authority;
"and, to shorten the business, I ordered all
"the various articles, consisting of more than
"a dozen in number, to be employed without
"favour or affection. The motley mixture
"was accordingly made, and, as every person
"consulted seemed to agree, that the longer
"it boiled the better it would prove, I ordered

"it to be put into the pot at midnight, and "sent for a famous nurse in the neighbour-"hood to sit up with it, and, with a vestal's "vigilance, to keep in the fire till the family "arose. In this state of concoction the pud-"ding remained till after the arrival of this "good company, who, I hope, will be so pre-"judiced in its favour, from the Herculean "labour which produced it, as to attack its "circumference with Herculean appetites."— Here ended the culinary oration, and, as I before observed, the subject of it contained unrivalled excellence; and, though we laughed at it and over it, we did not fail to cause a very apparent diminution of its ample dimensions. Thus, my dear friend, we eat and laughed, and drank and laughed, till night stole imperceptibly upon us; when our hospitable host informed us, that he had two beds and a cradle in his own house, and that he had prepared three others at two neighbouring farmers: so that we might be at rest, as to our lodging, nor like him encounter the perils of a darksome night. The squires, added he, must adjourn to my neighbours'; my two beds will serve the peer and the baronet, and I myself will take to the cradle. Now, this cradle, which caused us no little mirth,

and will, I presume, have a similar effect upon you, who are acquainted with the huge figure which was to occupy it—this cradle, I say, is a most excellent moveable for a small house. It is made of a sufficient size to hold an infant six feet in length, can be placed any where, and will enable an hospitable spirit to supply a friend with a lodging when his beds are engaged. If I had not been fearful of affronting our Divine, I should have indulged my curious fancy by going to roost in it; but the best bed was prepared for me, and the fine Holland sheets, which, probably, had not been taken out of the sweet-scented press for many a month, were spread for my repose: nor would my slumbers have been suspended for a moment, if the linen had not produced so strong an effluvia of rosemary, that I almost fancied myself in a coffin, and wrapped in a winding-sheet. But fatigue soon got the better of fancy; and I awoke the next morning to life and spirits, but not to immortality.

Before I bid you adieu, permit me to add a singular example of complimentary repartee, which our friendly host, very unexpectedly, addressed to me, previous to our departure.

As I was looking out of the parlour window, from whence nothing is to be seen but

a black, dreary heath, he asked me how I liked the prospect. I answered, that, from its wild appearance, if *Nebuchadnezzar* had been doomed to pasture in his environs, he must have died of hunger. And if that prince, replied the Doctor, had been sentenced to have passed his *savage years* in your park at *Hagley*, he need not have regretted the loss of a throne, or wished a return to the enjoyment of his human functions. At this period of self-importance, which, in the very description, returns upon me, you can not be surprized if I take my leave.

Adieu!

LETTER XLV.

MY DEAR ——,

IT gives me no small satisfaction to be assured, that my two last letters have afforded you the satisfaction it was their office to communicate. The rural Divine plays a most admirable part in the jovial interludes of provincial society. It is a pleasant circumstance to meet occasionally with a man, whose humour, sense, and foible are so blended, that, while he possesses the pleasant mixture of simplicity and vanity which bars him from distinguishing when you laugh with him or at him—you may give a loose to the whole of your mirthful dispositions, without any restraint from the fear of giving offence. Our Reverend friend told B— —, that he is in no small disgrace with his parishioners for entertaining so great a sinner as I am; and that one of them, who had seen me at *Kidderminster*, declares throughout the neighbourhood that I have a *cloven-foot*. I am not without

my expectations that equal vouchers will be produced for my tail and horns, and then the devil will be complete.

At length, the grave and anxious occupations of worldly wisdom succeed to mirth and jollity. The interest of money, and the value of lives, together with trusts and securities, are the subjects of my present meditations.—To explain myself, I am considering a plan for easing my estate of the jointures to the two dowager Lady Lyttletons—for they are both so in fact—by making a purchase of equivalent annuities for their *valuable* lives.—Fortune has been kind to me, and I will for once win your applause, by applying her gifts to sensible purposes. To use a news-paper species of portraiture, what think you of the picture of a young nobleman offering the favours of fortune on the altar of wisdom, by the present *Lord Lyttleton*? If this idea should be completed—and, I assure you, the dead colouring is disappearing apace—will you place the painting in the cabinet of your mind, in the room of the picture which you designed, and have so often retouched, of that self-same nobleman sacrificing the gifts of nature to folly, vice, and intemperance.

I trust and believe, that a sordid thirst after money will never be added to the catalogue of my failings. It is true, that the love of play proceeds from the desire of gain; and is, therefore, said to be founded on an avaricious principle. If this be fact, avarice is the universal passion; for I will venture to affirm, that, more or less, we are all gamesters by nature. But the desire of winning money for the sake of spending it, and encreasing the joys of life, is one thing; and the ardour of acquiring it, in order to lock it up, and render it useless, is another.

> Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
> From Heav'n: for e'en in Heav'n his looks and thoughts
> Were always downwards bent, admiring more
> The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
> Than ought divine or holy else enjoy'd
> In vision beatifick.———

I remain, most truly, &c.

I cannot, at present, give a correct answer to your enquiry; but, from the recollection of the moment, the only inscriptions written or corrected by my father, in the Temple of British worthies at Stow, are those beneath the Bustos of *Locke*, *Pope*, and *Sir John Barnard:* but I will take an opportunity of satisfying you with a more accurate information.

LETTER XLVI.

A——, by no means, deserves your pity; and the conduct which I have, of late, used, and shall continue to use, towards him, arises from my perfect knowledge of his character, and the remembrance of his former treatment of myself. I told you long ago, when my bulrush hung its head, that, high as this gentleman then bore himself, the time would come when he would hang his head in his turn, and bend his back for me to tread upon. All this and more is now come to pass.

You express your surprize that he does not discover some degree of resentment on the occasion of his journey to *Hagley*. The fever of that business flushed him with no small hope, and the succeeding ague shook him with disappointment; but he had the prudence to conceal his symptoms, and I left him to cure himself. He may bluster in a guard-room with new-commissioned ensigns, and, in the leisure of a tilt-yard duty, may weave fanciful wreaths of future fame; nay,

he may venture to give his name to the world in a news-paper, or the title-page of a miserable poem; but the prowess of our hero will go no farther. If I were to bid him go to the *Pomona* of *Hocknel* for a pippin, he would not hesitate a moment, and would burn his fingers willingly in roasting it; and, when I had eaten the pulp, he would content himself with the core.

> All this my little Greek exactly knows;
> And bid him go to hell, to hell he goes.

If, however, your obstinate humanity should look towards such an object, have a little patience, and he will give you an opportunity for the full exercise of it. I am in the secret; but I shall not gratify his vanity by betraying it. After all, I find him convenient and to my purpose. He is ready, submissive, and not without amusement. If he were to die, I should say with *Shakespeare*, *I could have better spared a better man.*

At this moment, he is sitting on the other side of my table, in the act of making some of his own bad poetry worse, in which agreeable business, I may, perhaps, be kind enough to give him some assistance. You would not, probably, have suspected him in so close a vicinity to me; but it is the fact: and when I

have folded up my letter, he shall enclose it in its *envelope*, and set the seal to this certificate of his own good qualities: nay, I will make him direct it into the bargain. Your pence, it is true, will suffer for this whim of mine, but the revenue will be a gainer; a circumstance which must satisfy you as a patriot, on the truly political idea of making follies productive to the state. You may observe, however, and with some reason, that every one should pay for his own. To such a remark I have nothing to answer, but that I am

Your sincere and faithful, &c.

LETTER XLVII.

I SHALL expect you with impatience, and am much flattered that you can leave the society of your friend C—— for the sake of yielding to my solicitations. Is it beyond the reach of your influence to persuade him to accompany you? I am apprehensive, that he may have some scruples in being a guest of mine; but, if he will accord me that honour, I will assume the virtue, though I have it not, and he shall find nothing *chez moi* which shall give the least offence to the tranquil purity of his character. Perhaps you will be my guarantee upon the occasion. We were at *Eton* together, though not in any particular intimacy; and since that time I had once the pleasure of dining with him. I happened by chance to be present when he proposed to give an *Etonian* dinner: his politeness led him to invite me and the party was most pleasant and classical. A particular circumstance of it I shall never forget. One of the company, who had done honour to his table

by indulging a very voracious appetite, when the desert was served, thought proper to recollect the deficiency of a dish of fish which had been promised him, and, in the true vein of gorged disappointment, reproached your friend for his forgetfulness. The reply was singular, affecting, and, to the best of my recollection, as follows: "When I met you this "morning," said Mr. C——, "I was proceed-"ing to *Temple-bar* for the purpose of expend-"ing an allotted trifle on a Turbot; but, a "few minutes after, I received an unwilling "application from a very distressed person, "to whom a guinea was far more necessary "than the addition of one particular dish to a "plentiful dinner would be to you, and you "very well know the strict regulations of my "Exchequer. It is true," continued he, "that "you have lost your fish; but it is equally "true, that, from the same cause, a poor un-"fortunate fellow-creature has lost his despair. "Besides, the relish of the Turbot must have "long been superceded on your palate, and I "have added a pleasure to my heart which will "last for ever." He expressed himself with much more ease and simplicity than I have done; and I was so affected, that, had I then enjoyed my present affluence, I should have

instantly subscribed to hospitals, and gone about in search of doing good. But, alas! these thoughts, morally speaking, of my better days, have been rendered fruitless in the succession of evil habits; and I know not where I shall find a restorative, unless the society of your friend should renew its former influence over me.

Another circumstance of a very different nature occurs to me from the recollection of that day's pleasure. Poor *John Damer* was one of the company. He has made a strange exit in a strange manner. We were at *Eton* and in Italy together, and at subsequent periods in the habits of friendly connection.—Few of those who knew him have been more gloomily affected by the melancholy event than myself. I have been informed, that the King has exerted his royal influence to prevent the publication of *David Hume's* posthumous treatise in defence of self-murder. I am well convinced that his Majesty has acted with his accustomed regard to the welfare of his people, in procuring the suppression of a work dangerous to society, and in direct opposition to evangelical precept: but, for my own part, I cannot conceive, that any man, in this period of the world, could ever be argued into putt-

ing a willing end to his existence, unless some circumstances of ill-fortune, some malady of the mind, or some torturing disease of the body more than co-operated with the arguments of the reasoning fatalist. *Montesquieu* does not write like himself upon the subject; and *Rousseau*, who seems purposely not to answer his own arguments in favour of suicide, defends it with sentiment instead of reason.—Many examples are given, in the works of different writers, of amazing coolness in the act of self-destruction, which represent the stroke as having been given in youth, health, and prosperity. I cannot trust to appearances in these or any similar examples; nor can I believe, that the *mens sana in corpore sano*, with the comforts of life, ever could submit to an act of such dreadful uncertainty. I have, sometimes, taken up the argument in favour of self-murder, by way of supporting an opinion, exercising a talent, or convincing a fool; but I will honestly acknowledge, that the weakest of my antagonists have ever got the better of me on this subject, though I might not perhaps publish my conviction. Virgil's picture of the after-misery of those whose hands have given a prematurity to their end,

would stagger the utmost sophistry of erring reason.

——————Quem vellent æthere in alto
Pauperiem pati et duros perferre labores!

Despair, as it arises from very different and opposite causes, has various and distinct appearances. It has its rage, its gloom, and its indifference; and while, under the former, its operations acquire the name of madness, under the latter it bears the title of philosophy. Poor *John Damer* was no philosopher, and yet he seems to have taken his leap in the dark with the marks both of an Epicurean and a Stoick. He acted his part with coolness, and sought his preparation in the mirth of a brothel.

This is an awful subject; and, in casting my eye over what I have hastily written upon it, I observe some inaccuracies which I should be glad to correct. But it is not my office, nor is it in my pretensions, to instruct you. When you are here, I will amuse you with a pamphlet, which, without that particular view, is a complete physical, or rather anatomical, reply to those who defend the right of self-murder. It is a treatise on the *Ganglions of the Nerves*, by a *Doctor Johnstone*, a physician in my neighbourhood. It is written with

the pen of a scholar, and possesses throughout a most perspicuous ingenuity. This gentleman attended my father in his last illness; and was not only his physician, but his confessor.

Your letter to me consists of four lines, and I have returned as many pages. This kind of illegal interest is not after my usual fashion; but your kindness deserves an hundred fold from

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER XLVIII.

YOU are not the only one of my many criticising friends, who have expressed their surprize at my taking so kindly to the *Surry Dell*, and becoming so dead to rural magnificence as to neglect *Hagley's* gaudy scene and proud domain. C—— H——, in one of her visits to this place, told me that I looked like a toad in a hole. Be that as it may, it is shady, elegant, convenient, luxuriant, and snug; a term peculiar to English comfort, and not translated into any other language. Besides, a villa is a necessary appendage to that rank whose dignity you so often recommend me to maintain; and in what spot could a British peer find a more delightful retreat than mine, to solace himself in the interval of publick duty? Or where is the *Ægerian* grot, in whose auspicious solitude he could better hold his secret counsels with the guardian Genius of his country. But, *badinage* apart, its vicinity to the metropolis is one of its principal recommendations; and, to a man of my ten-

dencies, a cottage at *Pimlico* is preferable to a palace in the distant counties. Here I find no inconvenience in a rainy day: the means of dissipating a gloomy temper are within my beckon. If I wish to be alone, I can shut my gates and exclude the world; or, if I want society, my post-chaise will quickly bear me hence, or fetch it here. On the contrary—*Hagley*, which is certainly an Elysian scene, uniting in itself grandeur, beauty, and convenience, does not possess any of these advantages; and I might die there of *ennui*, before any thing like the necessary remedy could be found. In that spot, all delightful as it is, I cannot enjoy the advantage of the society which I prefer; nor, when I am tired of company, is it possible for me to be alone. The neighbourhood is extremely populous; manufacturing towns surround me on all sides; turn-pike roads environ me; and the prospect from every window in my house glares with such a variety of intruding objects, that I have been often thankful to the shades of night for giving me to tranquillity and to myself. Besides, the parish-church is in my park; and I have more than once awoke from brilliant dreams, by the cackling of gossips in full trot to a christening; nay, I have some-

times shuddered to see on my splendid lawns the dirges due and sad array of the rustick funeral. But this is not all. Coaches full of travellers of all denominations, and troops of holiday neighbours, are hourly chasing me from my apartments, or, by strolling about the environs, keep me a prisoner in it. The lord of the place can never call it his for a day during the finer part of the year. Nor am I proud, as others have been, of holding myself forth to the complimentary envy of those who come to visit it. My pride is not of that complexion; and the consciousness of possessing the first place of its kind in Europe, is a sufficient satisfaction to me, without shewing any preference to it as a rural residence.

The little spot from whence I have the pleasure to address you, has won my fondest attachment. H— — left me this morning. We passed the whole of yesterday evening in searching into the nature of the soul, and contriving ways and means for the final dissolution of the world. We are neither of us qualified to make any great figure in astronomy or metaphysicks; nevertheless, we became very familiar with the heavenly bodies, and discoursed, with a most imposing gravity, on matter and spirit. We exercised all our inge-

nuity to find out in what part of the human frame the soul had fixed her abode, but were totally unable to make the discovery, till our friend, with his usual singularity of thought, determined it to be in every part where there is sensation, and, particularly, in those parts where sensation is most exquisite. But, as it is much easier to pull down systems than to establish them, we destroyed the globe, and all that it inherits, with surprising expedition. A comet was seized upon by both of us, at the same moment, as the engine to be employed in the tremendous conflagration. The contest for the originality of this idea was carried on, with equal zeal between us, for some time, which my antagonist concluded by introducing another very interesting subject for enquiry: Whether the great day of judgment was to precede, accompany, or follow this great event of the world's dissolution? In the course of his harangue, he rose to such a fervour of thought, delivered such forcible language, and intermingled such striking expressions from the scriptures, that he grew pale beneath his own conceptions. The alarm was contagious, and made my blood curdle in its veins. I verily believe, if a rattling thunder-storm had immediately followed his oration, that our

confusion would have been too serious to have admitted of an acknowledgment. The two ladies, who composed our audience, were thrown into such a terrour of mind, that I began to apprehend the evening's amusement would have concluded in sending two handsome and useful women to the *Magdalen*. My house, with all its advantages, is not calculated for the actual work of contrition, though it may prepare the way for it; and if such a scene of repentance had really happened, it would have constituted an æra in my life sufficient to seduce the attention of mankind from all the past singularities of it.

I remain, &c.

LETTER XLIX.

MY DEAR ———,

I HAVE obeyed your commands, and read, with a very continued attention, *Des Recherches sur le Despotisme Oriental.* The author is a person of considerable erudition, active thought, and lively imagination. He steers his vessel with no common address on the ocean of conjecture, and I have beheld his course with much admiration. But though he may help to forward an advanced progress in infidelity, I cannot flatter him with the supposition that he alone has ever made an infidel. The paradox of primitive theocracies, I believe, is not a new one, though he may have given it a novelty of examination, and branched it forth into a variety of new ramifications. A writer, who strikes at the very root of sacred history, which has been an object of faith to so great a part of the more enlightened world for such a course of ages, and possesses the support of collateral tradition, as well as a supernatural strength of internal evidence—such an author, I say, should produce something more than hypothe-

sis, though supported by the most *colossal* strength of human erudition: nay, it may not be the least, among the many arguments, in favour of the sacred writings, that nothing but hypothesis can be brought against them. A faith of some thousand years is not to be destroyed by the elaborate, but artificial conjectures of a modern infidel. I will oppose to your ingenious Frenchman the learned *Mr. Bryant*, of our own country, whose late splendid publication is an honour to our age and nation. The *Gallic* infidel must sink into nothing before the veteran abilities of our English believer.—These casual thoughts, my dear friend, are my own; and you may be assured, that I have not stolen them from any pious page of my father's manuscript lucubrations.

But I shall quit a subject, which is not in the ordinary line of my enquiries, and whereon I can only hazard a few occasional thoughts, from the uninformed reflections of the moment, to thank you for the very judicious and elegant manuscript which you have intrusted to my perusal. It has all my praise. The dialogue is natural; the language chaste; the characters finely discriminated; the sentiments admirably appropriated; and the moral, if I may use the expression, irresistibly proposed

to the business and bosom of the reader. I will hope that you will continue to gild your leisure-hours with such delightful amusements, and that your philanthropick spirit will give them to instruct and improve mankind.

What think you of bringing Mrs. *Montagu* and Miss *Carter* upon your charming theatre? The similarity of those ladies' characters in some points, and their dissimilitude in others, would be finely portrayed by your pen, and might give you an opportunity of determining the just merits and standard of a literary female. The one is an highly-instructed, accomplished woman, possessed of great affluence, who indulges herself in a chaste display of fashionable as well as literary elegance, makes her drawing-room the *Lycæum* of the day, maintains a luxurious hospitality for the votaries of that science which she loves, and patronizes the learning which she herself has adorned. The other, in a state of contented mediocrity, is humble as though she knew nothing, while she is not only the most learned woman of any age, but one of the most learned persons of that in which she lives. The pure, sublime genius, which never swerves from virtue, accompanies her in the paths of rigid discretion, and is contented to slumber,

while its favourite votary is employed in the daily, habitual exercise of domestick duties.—This colloquy should take place between Justice, accompanied by Vanity enforcing reward, and Merit attended by Modesty, who will scarce suffer an acceptance. They must be made to contend, not for their own, but each other's genius and virtue; and the scene may conclude with a well-decorated notice of that handsome independence which the former has attached to the valuable life of the latter. The whole, in your hands, will form a most entertaining, instructive, and exemplary picture.—Forgive my impertinence, I beseech you; but the idea came across me, and I could not resist the vanity of offering it to you.

After all, except in some few instances, I am not very partial to *literary ladies*: they are, generally, of an impertinent, encroaching disposition; and almost always bring to my mind the *female astronomer*, who, after applying her nocturnal telescope, for a long series of months, and had raised the jealousy, as well as the expectations, of the male star-gazers, declared her only object was to discover if there were *men* in the moon.

I am, with great regard
and admiration, &c.

LETTER L.

MY DEAR LORD,

I AM not so dull of apprehension as to be deceived by your elegant irony on the drawings of naked figures which you have accidentally seen in their preparation for my cabinet. As works of art they have a claim to real admiration, as being exquisite copies of nature in her most beautiful and interesting appearance. This you readily acknowledge; but seem rather to hint at the very great impropriety of suffering such representations to be held forth to publick view. In the application, at least, this idea of your Lordship's is somewhat erroneous: these designs are destined to be the ornaments of my private dressing room, *sanctum sanctorum*, into which they alone are admitted, whose steady virtue or experience of the world will enable them to look, without any immoral sensation, on the works of a far more lascivious pencil than that which I have employed.

The arguments which you have directed against my drawings, might be turned, with no small success, against the creative arts of painting and sculpture. I really feel a vast weight of matter rushing upon me; but, for your sake, I will resist its impulse, and acknowledge with you, that a different species of decoration is more suitable to common apartments, where promiscuous companies of either sex and every age are received; though a copy of *Titian's Venus* and the naked boys of *Dominichino* grace your with-drawing-room; not forgetting the sacrifice to *Priapus*, which is a principal ornament of your library. You have had the precaution, it is true, to hang a curtain before the former, which, I do insist, by tempting the guess of curious and sportive fancies, to say no worse, is a more actual promoter of blushing reflections, than the most open exposure of those naked charms that are obscured by it. Indeed, my Lord, your's is a false delicacy as applied to me, and unjust as proceeding from one who is himself guilty of similar and even worse practices. I really should have supposed, that an enthusiasm for the fine arts, and the repeated tour of Italy, would have taught you better. The *elegantium formarum spectator* is a character,

that, I should imagine, would ever command your esteem: nor could it have entered into my belief, that you, who look with such frequent admiration on your fine set of engravings after, if I mistake not, the *Duke of Marlborough's* valuable cabinet of antique gems, would have ventured at any thing like a remonstrance on my far more inanimate seraglio.

The unfledged youth, who begins to feel an unknown something running through his veins, for a short time might be affected by such unveiled representations; but to men of our age and experience, they would rather serve to create indifference, by continually presenting to us images of those objects, whose novelty is one of the principal causes of their influence upon us. Some of the ancient nations exhibited the different sexes naked to each other, in order to smother that inflammatory sensibility of nature, which you suppose the paintings of naked beauty, continually before my eyes, must be capable of continually inspiring. Upon my word, you give me a combustible temparament which I do not possess; and, if you judge of me, in this particular, from yourself, I give your Lordship joy of the very great advantage you have over me. Without entering further into

the argument, which, if duly pursued, of a moderate letter would make a long treatise, I shall only observe, that the mode of dress, now adopted by our women of fashion, is more seducing and inflammatory, and has a more direct tendency to call forth loose affections in our sex, than any painted representation of female beauty, though finished by the exquisite pencil of *Titian* himself. Your Lordship's *Venus* reposes, with little interruption, behind her curtain; while the ladies of the world unfold to every eye that share of their charms which are best calculated to seduce it, and to fill the fancy with the idea of more winning beauties, which the mantle of fashion does not, as yet, disdain to cover.

I called at your door to laugh with you upon the subject of your reproof; and, though you had taken your flight to Bath, I was resolved that you should not escape me.—Perhaps you have not heard of *Cosway's* misfortune. In a pitched battle with his *monkey*, he has been completely worsted, and now keeps his bed from the wounds he received in the combat. I have, however, the pleasure to tell you, that the hand of your little *Raphael* has escaped the fury of his antagonist, and is still reserved to delight every lover of

its art; but, as there is a grievous laceration in one of his legs, there is some reason to fear that the important strut may be lost for ever.

I am, with great regard, &c.

LETTER LI.

I PLEAD guilty to a very trifling part of the charge which you bring against me; but I peremptorily deny that the accusing lady is a woman of virtue. Do you believe that every wife, who does not advance into the guilt of adultery, is a virtuous character? Is it your opinion, that every unmarried lady, who does not keep an handsome footman, or make an occasional retreat into the country, to drink ass's milk for a dropsy, has a right to boast of chastity? Alas! sir, I know many of these, and hear daily of more, who, though they have not been guilty of what is pre-eminently called a criminal deviation from the nuptial vow or virgin honour, possess more unchaste minds, than many of those forlorn wretches who gain their daily bread by the miserable trade of nocturnal prostitution.

Your artful, angry, or disappointed relation (for I have not yet decided which of these epithets is most applicable to her present sit-

uation) makes out a strange and horrid story from the ordinary occurrence of an accidental half-hour's *tete a tete.* I found her, *par hazard*, alone, and in those spirits which seemed to ask for that kind of libertine-*badinage*, which in her more sober humour would not have been exerted. The idle raillery was parried by her with much skill and coquetry: she neither retired into another room, nor rung for a servant to show me the door, or even discovered a gleam of disapprobation by a moment's gravity. On the contrary, she pressed my longer stay, and at my departure reproached me for the infrequency of my visits. But, stung with the mortification that her upbraidings were thrown away (excuse, I beseech you, the necessary vanity of my justification) she has thought proper to cry aloud against me, to revenge what she might consider as a neglect, or, perhaps, to make the world believe that she was still capable of inspiring such a violence of passion, which in her history so irresistably impelled me to make an adventurous attack upon her virtue. It really concerns me, that you should be, at once, the engine of her malicious rage, and the dupe of your own amiable credulity. Her threats, though they were to take her own

shape, would not alarm me; but she knows too much of the wicked world to put them in execution—believe me, my friend, she will not give her many enemies such advantage over her.

I shall plead guilty, in a more general manner, to another charge which your accusing spirit has brought against me—that I have a decided ill opinion of our co-temporary women in high life. The corruption of the present times is in no degree so strongly marked as by the modern profligacy of female manners. Examine the catalogue of those ladies, whose rank, beauty, accomplishments, or fortune, give them an influence in the great world, and then tell me what you think of the present state of superiour female character. Is their rank employed to give an example to the inferiour orders? Is their beauty exerted in the various services of virtue? Are their accomplishments exercised in confirming and prolonging the duration of virtuous affection? And is their fortune taxed with relief to poverty, encouragement to arts, or protection to science, otherwise than in subservience to the caprices of fashion? Is a simplicity of character visible in female youth after fourteen years of age? And does not the reign of co-

quetry commence before, and often times long before, that period? Trace the course of fashionable education from the cradle to the altar; examine with attention the efforts and views of maternal tenderness, in the circle of your own society; and tell me where is that perfection of female character to be found—for it might every where exist—which can awe the most dissolute into respect and admiration? You must very well know, that the passion of the most impassioned is very rarely indeed so irresistible as to inflame with the design of carrying the fortress of chastity by a *coup de main*; and when such attempts are made, it is some visible breach in the out-works which encourages to that fierce mode of conquest. A chaste, virtuous woman is an awful character: something supernatural seems to surround and shroud her from the profane approaches of seduction. Innocence may be seduced, and ignorance may be deceived; but chastity, founded on the firm basis of pure virtue, holds forth to the eye of the most artful, as well as the most rampant lust, the repulsive evidence of impregnable security.

You must well remember where we dined together not many weeks ago; nor can it have been possible for you to forget the friendly ap-

prehensions which our hostess expressed lest the House of Commons should detain Mr. — —, as she was sure Lady — — would not be in tolerable humour if he was not of the party. At length, however, they both came, were carefully placed together at table, and seemed in perfect contentment. Now, all this pretty business was managed in chaste society, and in a virtuous house ; nevertheless, it appeared to me, that the mistress of it, even in the presence of her daughters, did little less than promote the progress of adultery. This, you see, is so common an arrangement, that Mrs. — —, who holds herself forth as a woman of renowned discretion, considered it as a matter of course. I wonder much that you will suffer such rare virtue, as dwells in that most amiable woman whom you possess, to risk the taint of such societies.

I would forgive the artifice of dress, and the little hypocrisies of personal decoration ; they originate from a desire to please, and can never produce any fatality of deception: but the wearing a mask upon the mind, and the giving a falacious appearance to character, is a forgery that becomes oftentimes more fatal to happiness and honour, than a crime of the same title which never finds mercy. How

many women are there now flaunting about our world, who have made use of the falsest pretences to obtain a settlement and an husband; and, when they have succeeded, not only throw aside the painted veil which covered them, but laugh at the poor hapless dupe who reproaches their duplicity!

> They daub their tempers o'er with washes
> As artificial as their faces;

and while some of them condescend to appear charming, both in mind and person, to all the world, poor *Benedick*, who possesses the envied privilege of going behind the curtain, alone sees the decomposition of that beauty and virtue which leaves not a look or a wish to please behind them.

That excellent woman, whom you have the supreme happiness to call your own, is, as I have been told, the only one of her sex who deigns to say a word in my favour. The reason, my dear sir, is evident: she is the only one I know who possesses a sufficient share of real, intrinsick virtue, to keep me, in her presence, in the most patient and satisfactory decorum. Those charms which, while they allure, correct, and, while they delight, improve, are of rare growth; and it becomes the interest of a corrupt world to employ its contagion to their

destruction. This is a language which you might not expect from such an incorrigible sinner as I am; but believe me, it is that of all the tribe when reason resumes her lucid interval: and if the women of coquetry, vanity, and intrigue, knew how much their most devoted, admired, and familiar favourites, at times despise and speak of them, they would have recourse to the sincerity of virtue, to obtain honest praise, real admiration, and solid pleasure.

It will afford me no small satisfaction to hear that I have laid your spirit of censure, and that on this subject at least it will haunt me no more: for, though publick severity hardens me more and more against publick opinion, I should ever wish to justify myself to you, when I possess the means of justification.—— You will do me the favour to present my very sincere respects to Mrs. — —, and receive the affectionate regard of

Your faithful, &c.

LETTER LII.

I WISHED, for many reasons, that you could have accompanied me hither: but another is now added to the number, by an unpleasant indisposition that has hung upon me for some time; and, though it does not keep me at home, it deprives me of any and every enjoyment when I go abroad. I want you to console me, to assist my present tendency to grave speculations, and to behold me an example of your favorite proposition, that man is a superstitious animal. A being continually agitated by hopes and fears, is naturally disposed to consider every trivial occurrence as an omen of his good or evil fortune. The hot and cold fits of life, from one or other of which we are seldom free, keep the mind in that tremulous state of suspense which makes reason subservient to the sickly power of imagination. Common superstition is awakened by the eager pursuit of the most common objects, and is particularly visible in those who attend

upon the nightly orgies of the god of game; where the force of lucky and unlucky omens is strongly, as well as universally impressed.

Women, and men who resemble women, are supposed, from extreme fear of disappointment, to be very generally disposed to the habit of drawing idle consequences from every trivial event. But wherefore do I venture an imputation against the weaker sex, or the less resolute part of my own, when a moment's reflection convinces me that the strongest mind cannot always resist the same influence; and that it is not in the utmost perfection of human nature to boast a perfect superiority over it. The wide extent of antiquity is full of it: the flight of birds and the entrails of beasts determined the fate of kings and the prosperity of nations. The vision of the night, and the awakening hour, gave a colour of good or evil to the succeeding day; and the unwieldy code of proverbial wisdom is indebted for its bulk to the liberal aid of pregnant superstition; nay, were I to explore the modern and more rational system of late ages, it would only be tracing a more extensive chart of human credulity.

This propensity of the mind, which is trifling and transitory in the course of ordinary

occurrences, becomes a grievous and oppressive weight, when, from the frowns of fortune, or the languors of disease, it passes from this world to another. When the frame begins to discover symptoms of decay, when its pains and debility fix the gloomy idea of an eternal separation upon a mind unused to similar, or perhaps any serious contemplations, there is no alternative but Stoical apathy or fanciful superstition. I am not disposed to admit the possibility of the former; or, at least, it is beyond the reach of my nature to attain it: I must, therefore, submit to the latter, and endeavour to shelter my weakness under that of all mankind in all ages of the world.

Will you believe me, when I tell you, that in a morning's ride, which conducted me by some of the tremendous fires employed in the manufactories in my neighbourhood, I shuddered at the sight of their angry flames, and expressed my sensations to the young lady I accompanied, in such a manner, as to make her cheek pale as my own?—It has been observed by some wicked wit, and I believe by *Voltaire*—for the thought is of his cast—that, on the morning of the *thirtieth* of *January*, every sovereign in Europe rises with a *crick*

in his neck. Now, you may apply this idea, for your amusement, to the alarms I have just described. I am sinner enough to justify the application, and am, at present, humble enough to acknowledge the truth of it. The same shrewd genius declared, when he was out of humour with a certain race of kings, *que tous, les Bourbons craignent le diable:* nevertheless, (for I am determined to be even with him,) if any credit is to be given to general and uniform report, the lively satirist was himself subject to certain fits of despondency, when he suffered severely from similar apprehensions. *Mors instans numina majora facit.*

Tranquillity, I am told, is absolutely necessary for the restoration of my body; but, in submitting to the proposed remedy for my corporal infirmities, I shall certainly acquire all the horrours of intellectual disease, if you do not hasten to console me. If you refuse me your temporal comforts, I shall be under the necessity of applying to the reverend *John Westly* (who, according to the Birmingham paper, is preaching about the neighbourhood,) to assist me with his spiritual elixir.

—— —— was here last week, and happy beyond expression in the full enjoyment of

rural luxury; but the beautiful scenes, which filled his mind with such mad and mortifying delight, are viewed, by my jaundiced eye, with less than indifference: though, when he exclaimed,

> Rura mihi, et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes;
> Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius;——

a moment's feeble inspiration enabled me to add,

> ——————O ubi campi,
> Sperchiusque, et *virginibus* bacchata *Lacænis*
> Taygeta!——————.

Adieu, and believe me, &c. &c.

I have this moment received a letter from ——— ———, which proves him to be the most ungrateful villain in existence. This conviction has, I believe, forced an unexpected glow upon my wan countenance. It may be for the best, that my immediate indisposition prevents me from honouring the rascal with a reproach.

LETTER LIII.

MY DEAR — —,

THE letter, which I had the pleasure of receiving from you yesterday, afforded me all the satisfaction I had so much reason to expect from it. But as every good in this world must have its alloy, it was accompanied by one of those half-dictatorial epistles, which, under the colour of friendly concern, and in the garb of respectful language, contains no small degree of concealed impertinence. A certain relation of mine never fails to pester me with a few of them, whenever I happen to be in his debt. I had rather pay him ten per cent. if he would spare his counsels, than have the loan without interest and encumbered with them. But this is not all; for I am obliged to play the hypocrite against the grain, to acknowledge his goodness, to promise amendment, and so on.

The last *Paris* jaunt ended unprofitably: it emptied my purse, led me into difficulties, and made me dependent where dependence is particularly painful; to which may be added some scurvy treatment, which I do not like to think of, and am sorry has got abroad. —— ought to have cut the bully's throat, without hesitation; but he was a tranquil spectator of the business, and had not the gratitude to risk his own pitiful life to save my honour.

When I seriously reflect on the miseries of dependence, by whatever name it may be distinguished, I cannot but admire the prudence, and envy the disposition, of those men who preserve themselves above it. I am convinced, that no man can be happy, or honourable, who does not proportionate his expenses to the means he possesses: and if the phrase is significant, that describes the man who pays every body, as *above the world*, he, who has disabled himself from pursuing the same conduct, must submit to the abject idea of being beneath it. If your creditor is a shoe-maker, and you cannot discharge his bill, whatever your rank may be, he becomes your superiour; and the moment you put it out of your power to pay a servant his wages, he becomes your master, and you must not only submit to his

impertinence, but connive at his fraud, in order to prevent this liveried creditor from making his demands. I tell you honestly, that the galled horse winces on the occasion, and that my withers are most severely wrung. I feel the grief so sensibly, that, if I had an amanuensis at hand, I should like to patrol my library, and dictate a discourse on worldly prudence. The circumspect use of money, arising, not from any avaricious principle, but from the wise practice of applying means to ends, will keep a man in that state of independence which is the rock of life. On that foundation he can stand firm, return the haughty look, smile at the supercilious frown, give truth its due force, and scorn the embroidered lie. You have a son; and let me advise you, while the smartings of the moment dictate the counsel, to instil into his tender mind the lasting impression of a liberal prudence, without which virtue is continually harrassed by necessity, pleasure has but an interrupted enjoyment, and life becomes a chequered scene of agitation and distress.

———Quærenda pecunia primum;
Virtus post nummos.———

But this by the way.—You inform me that you every day expect an increase of your fam-

ily, which I very sincerely hope may prove an addition to your happiness. However, I cannot but think it a great mistake to make merry over a creature who is born to the same miseries as ourselves, who, the first moment he draws the breath of life, is enrolled in the register of death, and, from the womb, makes swift and direct advances to the grave. I am almost a convert to the practice of the *Thracians*, who wept beside the cradle, and danced around the tomb. These opinions will probably preclude any proposals to me from becoming a God-father. Mrs. —— —— once did me the honour to hint something of that nature: but I beg you to tell her, from your own experience, that I am too unsanctified a person to take upon me the character of a baptismal sponsor. You will then be so obliging as to add, from me, that I shall ever have too sincere a regard for any child of her's, to procure it so ungracious an entrance into the Christian Church, as I am apprehensive that it would find, were I to be the officiating usher on the occasion.

I am, with great regard, &c.

LETTER LIV.

I RECEIVE your congratulations with an unaffected sensibility; but, as your applause proceeds from the partiality of a favourable representation, and not from your own immediate experience, I may, without impropriety, or any false show of modesty, to which I am not very much habituated, observe, that the part I took in the debate to which you so kindly allude, would not have been so favourably mentioned, if you had been one of its crowded audience.

I will tell you, with great truth, that it was an important object with me to exert the full force of my mind and talents on the business of that day. I had directed all my thoughts to that purpose, and not only exerted a very unusual industry in acquiring the knowledge necessary to give my opinions their due weight, but had laboured the dress in which they were to be clothed, and attentively composed the decorations which were to give the

final embellishment. In short, I omitted no mode of study, reflection, or exercise, which might enable me to force conviction, and ravish applause. But I succeeded in neither; and, after a speech of some length, I sat down, oppressed with disappointment and mortification. Several circumstances unexpected in themselves, and untoward in their nature, co-operated to the fall of my pride on that day. In the morning, while I was rehearsing my part to A— —, by some mistake H— — was admitted to me, and not only interrupted my lesson, but, by the ready communication of his eccentrick flights upon the same subject, threw my well-marshalled band of ideas into irretrievable confusion. But this was not all; he desired to accompany me to the house, and, in our way thither, he seized upon the bugle ornaments of my clothes, as a subject for still more discomfiting singularites of thought; so that I was most heartily glad when my coach broke down in Parliament-street, and produced a separation. The worst, however, remains behind. It was my purpose to follow the *Earl of Shelburne;* and in consequence of such a plan, I had necessarily pre-supposed the line of debate he would take, with the general turn of

argument he might adopt, and had prepared myself accordingly. But all my conjectures proved erroneous; for that noble Lord took a course so different from my pre-suppositions, and displayed a degree of political erudition so far beyond me, that, when I arose, the confusion between my prepared thoughts, and those which were suggested by the able discourse of the foregoing speaker, was so great, that, although I was not thrown into hesitation, I got so wide of the point before me, as to be called to order with great vehemence and some propriety from the opposite side of the house. This proved *confusion worse confounded;* and though I proceeded with some degree of spirit and recovery, I sat down, at length, with much self-dissatisfaction: nor had I reason to think, from the succeeding part of the debate, that I had made any impression on those within the bar, whatever I might have done among the tribe of curious listeners without it.

This is the true, unvarnished state of the case; and, from the circumstances of it, I have formed a resolution, which, I trust, you will approve—to make no more such studied preparation. I will give the announced subjects all the consideration they deserve, acquire all

the knowledge of them in my power, form my general principles, and leave their particular arrangement, with the necessary shape, dress, and delivery, to the circumstances and impressions of the moment.—When a senator is to take the lead in a debate, in order to introduce a projected motion of his own, or is engaged to second that of another, he may enter upon the task with the most minute verbal preparation; but, when he is to take his casual turn, he must trust to his feelings of the moment, operating upon the knowledge of the moment. If a man, with the common gifts of speech, possesses a good store of the latter, he may be soon habituated to yield himself to the former, with a certain assurance of acquiring an important political reputation.

In *American* affairs I have ever possessed a perfect uniformity of opinion. My doctrine has ever been, that legislation involves in it every possible power and exercise of civil government. For this principle I shall never cease to contend; though I am forced unwillingly to acknowledge, that the ministerial means of supporting it have, at times, been very erroneous. But you may be assured, that, if some better plans for reinstating Great-Britain in the full dominion of her revolted

colonies be not pursued (an event which humanity at first, succeeded by mis-information and later indecision, has so unfortunately delayed, but which is still practicable) ministers shall hear the deep-toned energy of my reproach: I will lift up my voice against their timid and indecisive counsels. My political career, at least, shall not be marked with dishonour.

I cannot do better, than, with the feelings of the present moment, to assure you of my most grateful acknowledgements for the regard you have shown, on so many occasions, to

Your most faithful, &c.

LETTER LV.

INDEED, my friend, you are quite wild on the subject of eloquence. It may adorn our parliamentary debates, but it will not save our country. It is an adventitious qualification, that will do but little, unless other more substantial talents and attainments are in alliance with it. An orator, in Cicero's definition of the character, in which, I suppose, he designed to comprehend himself, combines every thing which is great in human nature; but the mere man of words, metaphors, and impudence, in which, you may tell me, I should comprehend myself, is nothing more than an useful tool in the hands of superiour direction.

You are very sensible, but you mistake my sense. I did not declare it to be my opinion that we had no orators among us, but that there was a melancholy dearth of real statesmen. Perhaps, there never was a period, in the annals of this or any other country, which

has produced more able publick speakers than that wherein we live. The system of attack and defence, displayed every session in both houses of parliament, produces specimens of oratorical abilities which would have done honour to any nation at any period. Eloquence is a powerful auxiliary to great political talents; but it is nothing without them—I mean, as to any great line of national utility. Mr. *Edmund Burke*, who is a prodigy in his kind, will never make a leading statesman. I do not know, nor have I ever heard of any man who could deliver such a rapid, correct, adorned, and highly-finished oration, as frequently proceeds from the instantaneous impulse of this gentleman's illuminated faculties. As a scholar, as a man of universal knowledge, as a writer, he is the object of my most sincere admiration; but, in my opinion, he would never figure in office beyond *the board of trade*. *Charles Fox's* abilities and elocution are of a decided superiority; but, out of the senate, their exertions would be of dubious expectation. If the formation of a new ministry were to fall to my lot, *Charles* could not be engaged in a more busy part than is generally allotted to a *vice-treasurer of Ireland*. As for *Colonel* B— —, nature designed him

for the service of attack: he is nothing but in the house of commons, nor does he figure there but in opposition. To muzzle the mastiff, he must have a place; for, while he sat on the treasury-bench, *he was dumb, and opened not his mouth.* *Lord Weymouth* is not an orator; but he delivers his good sense with a very becoming dignity. The *Duke* of G——'s speeches are *words, words, words;* but are accompanied with an imposing air of consequence, which tells you, in every look of gesture, and expression, what the speaker thinks of himself. *Lord* C—— an orator!—Where was your reflection fled, or in what quarrel had you engaged with reason and judgment, when you made such a mistaken declaration? Believe me, my dear friend, he possesses nothing but a little, literary, spangled kind of embroidered politicks; pretty, decorative, and in fashion; but without any thing like solidity of abilities, or permanency of character. I could never view him in any other light, not even when he presided at a commission, whose history should be blotted from the annals of Great-Britain.—Our present *Palinurus* is by no means deserving of that contempt, which some men, very much his inferiours in every thing, think proper to

throw upon him; and the secretary for the American department ranks high among our modern politicians:—nor must *Lord Shelburne* be forgotten, who possesses, in a brilliant degree, the gift of utterance, and is a perfect *vade-mecum* in politicks. I bear a willing testimony to *Lord Camden's* vigourous understanding; and I possess an hereditary admiration of *Lord Mansfield's* very superiour talents and character: but the leading lawyers, however able or learned, do not come within the compass of our present discriminations. But all the eloquence on which you build your hopes, and all the abilities which our leading men possess, if brought into one aggregate mass of political talents, would not compose that consummate character on whom a nation might repose with confidence and security. Is there a man among us, who can claim an equal share of ministerial reputation with *Mr. Pelham* or *Mr. George Grenville?*

But I must add, for our consolation, that our enemies cannot boast of any intellectual superiority over us:—their mistakes have kept pace with our errours: the catalogue of their blunders is not less bulky than our own. Besides, we still bear ourselves like a great people; we do not discover any marks of des-

pondency; and, I trust, we shall continue to support our national character, to the confusion of our enemies, and the final glory of our country.

I have this day been informed, that *Dr. Price*, the *Dr. Brown* of the present day, has been formally and solemnly invited by the Congress to take upon him the formation and superintendency of their exchequer. It would gladden my very soul to hear that he was embarked for America; though, I fear, he is too much of a self-politician to take such a step. The labours of his theological accompting-house would be of no small service to *Great-Britain*, if they were employed beyond the *Atlantick*. This reverend gentleman, in his sad vaticinations of British downfal, shelters himself beneath the double character of a political prophet and Christian divine. If America should finally become independent, the prophet will then exult in the accomplishment of an event which he has long foretold: if, on the contrary, the power of *Great-Britain* over her colonies should be re-established, the Calvinistical cant of the divine must display itself in an humble, submissive resignation to the dispensations of Heaven.

I am, with great regard, &c.

LETTER LVI.

MY DEAR SIR,

I ACKNOWLEDGE, with a very serious concern, the indecisive and sluggish spirit of the present administration. This political temper of our leading statesmen was amiable in its origin, perhaps pardonable in its progress, but is equally unaccountable and disgraceful, to say no worse, at this very important period. The humanity of the royal breast, co-operating with the moderate spirit of his immediate councils, and the general disposition of the nation, produced those lingering measures in the beginning of the present troubles, which encouraged the insolence of democratick ambition. If half the regiments, which have hitherto been employed in vain, with a proportionable fleet, had crossed the *Atlantick* at the early period of the American revolt, the mishapen legions of rebellion would have been awed into submis-

sion, and the numerous loyal inhabitants would have had a strong-hold to which they might have resorted for protection, instead of being urged, by the hopes of preserving their menaced property, to join the standard of rebellion, to which, by seduction, by habit, or by necessity, many of them vowed, and some of them have proved, their fidelity.

This humane disposition of government towards the colonies, which has proved a fatal errour in the politicks of our day, naturally led to another, which arose from the placing a confidence in, and drawing their intelligence from, men, some of whom I imagine, were as deficient in judgment as the rest were in honesty; I mean the American refugees. By their suggestions ministers were influenced to continue the inactive line of conduct, till independence was thundered in their ears, and circumstances seemed to announce that alliance which has since taken place between the natural enemies of this country and its revolted subjects. Permit me to observe, that, in the early period of this unhappy business, the nation at large seemed indisposed to adopt the measures of fire and sword. The people, very generally, hoped and believed, that the alternate anathemas and conciliatory pro-

positions of our acts of parliament would have answered their beneficial intentions of quieting the disorders of the colonies; and I verily believe, if, at the period to which I allude, a parliamentary motion had been made to provide for the sending a large fleet and army, with an active design, to America, that ministerial power would have met with a very numerous and respectable opposition: nor would the humanity of the nation at large have been satisfied with a design which portended the slaughter of British subjects; while faction would have lifted up its voice against it, as being framed upon the principle of extending, with drawn swords and bayonets fixed, the powers of corruption, and the influence of the crown. I again repeat, that, at this time, there was a very general aversion in the British nation from entering seriously into the contest; for, even after the Americans had published their separation from Great-Britain, and hostilities were actually commenced, the exertions of British valour were languid, and the rebels, at least on the sea, gained more advantages than they have since done with the open alliance of France and the secret aid of Spain. When that unnatural union took place, the British nation underwent a pretty

general and very sudden change in sentiments; and many of the most rational friends of America could no longer consider its inhabitants as fellow-subjects, when they humbly implored the ready ambition of France to support them in their disobedience to their lawful sovereign.

At this period, I must acknowledge that my expectations were broad awake to the most vigourous exertions of the British government. I did not doubt but the Genius of my country would arise and shake his spear.—Alas!—one general was appointed upon a principle of reconciliation, and he does not reconcile; a second is named, and accoutred beyond example, for execution, and he executes nothing. A third succeeds, and new expectations are on the wing. Immense expenses are incurred, the national debt enormously encreased, and no substantial advantages are obtained. At length my patience is almost exhausted; I begin to view the indecisive spirit of ministry in a criminal light; and, if some promising symptoms of a change in their measures do not appear at the meeting of parliament, I will repeat what I have now written, and much more, in their very teeth. The place I hold shall not bribe me from let-

ting loose the angry spirit of my reproach against them.

But another scene is opening that is pregnant with more alarm, and may bring on a contest more trying to this nation, than the trans-atlantick commotions and the ambition of France. I allude to the growing discontents of Ireland. You must too well know that there are, at this moment, thirty thousand independent men in arms in that kingdom, who have erected their own standards, and are prepared either to repel a foreign invasion, or to resist domestick tyranny. The *Irish* have long been an oppressed people; but oppression has not quenched their spirit, and they have seized on the present favourable moment to demand justice; nay, if they were to demand more than justice, England is not in a situation to refuse it. But of these matters I shall soon be better informed; and you may be assured of being the first repository of my future and more mature opinions. This is rather a disheartening subject. It demands my utmost resolution to look towards the storm which is gathering in the sister-kingdom. If, however, that can be dissipated, and the bond of peace, which is already cracked, be restored, my fears will vanish, and I shall no

longer doubt but that *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, in spite of American rebellion, of foreign foes, of an indecisive, timid, procrastinating ministry, and of a noisy, malicious, hungry faction, will work out their own salvation, and close the present contest with added glory.————I am, &c.

LETTER LVII.

I WILL endeavour to obey your commands, and, if possible, to compress my unprepared reflections into the compass of this paper. The *Opposition* is respectable for rank, property, and abilities; but it is feeble and unimportant, from the narrowness of its plans, as well as the want of a sincere confidence, a firm union, and, as I shrewdly suspect, a general political integrity in the parties that compose it. They all readily accord in opposition to the measures of government, but differ, not only in the manner, but in the time of exertion. They all agree to go forth against the enemy; but each distinct body follows its own leader, and chooses its own mode of attack; they never unite but for the purpose of the moment; by which means, that strong-compacted, lasting force, which, directed to one point, and at one instance, would scatter alarm through any administration, is frittered down into a variety of desultory operations,

which would disgrace the meanest ministerial apprehension.

The warmest friend of government cannot deny, that in the minority, there are men of sound principle and proved integrity. They are indeed, but few in number, and may be easily distinguished from those who are influenced by the dæmon of disappointed ambition, the fury of desperate faction, and the suggestions of personal rancour. It has been a matter of surprize to many sensible, reflecting persons, that the opposition did not use every possible means to obtain the aid and countenance of Lord Chatham's abilities, and concentrate, as it were, their scattered rays in the *focus* of that great man's character. Under such a leader they might have acted with effect, and knocked so loud at the door of administration, as to have made every member of it tremble, even in the most secret and guarded recesses of the cabinet. But such a coalition was wholly impracticable, even if the veteran statesman had been free from those bodily infirmities which so seldom permitted him of late to step forth to any publick exertion. If we except *Lord Camden*, there is not one of the leading actors of opposition, who has not, at some time or other, calumni-

ated, deceived, deserted, or, in some manner, mis-treated this great man. Lord S— —e's oratorical Echo made his first entrance into the house of commons notorious, by flying, as it were, at his very throat: and yet this man has been proud to wear the armorial banner at his funeral. The first day on which the *Earl of Chatham* took his seat in the house of peers, the Duke of R— — was forced to bow beneath its reproof for insulting him. The Duke of G— —, who, to use his own words, had accepted the seals merely to trail a pike under the command of so distinguished a politician, when advanced to an higher post, turned an angry face against the leader whom he had deserted. Even the M—— of R— — —, when at the head of his short-lived administration, was vain enough to affect a refusal of Mr. *Pitt's* assistance. The conduct of such men, though it might be despised, could not be entirely effaced from his mind by all the submissive homage they afterwards paid him; and, though he may have since lived with some of them in the habits of occasional intercourse, you may be assured, if his health had permitted a re-entrance into the publick service, that he never would have engaged in the views of men whom he could not trust. The

ministry, I believe, sent somewhat of an embassy to him, which he treated with contempt: and if Lord S——e, in an occasional visit to *Hayes*, undertook a similar business, on the part of opposition, I doubt not but the answer he received, though perhaps more softened, had its concomitant mortification. During the last years of his venerable life, he seemed to stand alone; or made his communications to no one but Lord *Camden*, whom

> ———He faithful found among the faithless,
> Faithful only he.———

The grave is now closed upon that illustrious statesman, and his splendid orb is set for ever. There was that in his character which gave him a very distinguised superiority over the rest of mankind. He was the greatest war-minister this kingdom ever knew; and the four years of his administration form the most brilliant period that the British annals, or perhaps those of the world, can produce. They who aim at the diminution of his glory, and that of his country, by attributing the rapid change of national affairs, under his administration, to chance and the fortunate circumstances of the moment, must be slaves to the most rooted prejudice, the foulest envy,

or the darkest ignorance. To the more brilliant part of his life, let me add, that he was a minister who detested the arts of corruption, set his face against all court as well as cabinet intrigues, and quitted his important station with unpolluted hands. It is a great national misfortune that the mantle of this political patriarch has not been caught by any of his successors. We are not deficient in men of genius, and both houses of parliament give daily examples of eloquence which Rome and Athens never excelled; nevertheless, there does not appear to be a man in the kingdom with that power of understanding, depth of knowledge, activity of mind, and strength of resolution, sufficient to direct our harrassed empire. There are many among us, who are capable of being second in command, and filling all the subaltern departments with adequate ability; but the State, as well as the army, wants a commander in chief. The truncheon is become little more than an useless trophy, as an hand fit to grasp it is no longer to be found.

In bearing my poor testimony to the *manes* of Lord *Chatham*, I have yielded to the impulse of my very soul. In this imperfect act of veneration I can have no interest, for the

object of it is gone where the applause of this world cannot reach him; and, as I ventured to differ from him when alive, and delivered the reasons of my difference to his face, what motive can there be for me to flatter him now he is no more? To oppose the sentiments of that venerable statesman, was an undertaking which shook my very frame. My utmost resolution, strengthened by a sense of duty, and the laudable ambition of supporting what I conceived to be right, against the proudest names, could not sustain me. You, I believe, were present when I sunk down and became silent beneath the imposing superiority of his abilities; but I did not feel it a defeat to be vanquished by him:

——————nec tam
Turpe fuit vinci, quam contendisse decorum est.

LETTER LVIII.

YOUR letter arrived, most opportunely, to awaken me from the slumbering *ennui* of a toilette. I was actually in the power of my valet de chambre, when it came to delight, as well as instruct me; and I have proposed a truce with powder, pomatum, and papillotes, to encourage a thought which instantaneously arose from my situation, and may, in its progress, produce a suitable answer to your philosophick epistle.

That very important and unexpected events arise from the most trivial causes, is to be discovered in every page of history, as well as in every line of the passing volume of life. Circumstances, to all appearance, the most inconsequential and insignificant, have not only dipped thousands of pens in the bitter ink of controversy, produced infinite envy, heart-burning, and calumny, but have also turned the plough-share and the pruning-hook into weapons of bloodshed and destruction.

Turning away, with alarm, from the subject at large, which would be little less than the history of the world, permit me to call your attention to the virulent animosities which have been created, among a large and powerful part of mankind, in different ages, by the modes of dressing the hair, wearing beards, and weaving periwigs. It is a dressing-room subject, and, being arrayed in all the satin-dignity of a *robe de chambre*, I feel myself inspired to pursue it.

It is not with any view to instruct you, that I mention the great veneration which in former times has been paid to the hair, but to give somewhat of order and arrangement to the weighty matter under my immediate consideration. That the tresses of pious virgins were thought an acceptable offering to their tutelary goddess, is well known by every classsical student; nor is it less an object of common literary knowledge, that among the Greeks and Romans, the first fruits of the human temples, as well as of the chin, were claimed, with great ceremony, by the altars of Bacchus, Neptune, and other presiding divinities. In later times, but in the early part of our æra, (you perceive I write as a Christian,) an oath was supposed to demand

instant conviction, when a man swore by his hair; and the act of salutation was never so graceful or acceptable, as when it was accompanied by the plucking an hair from the head, and presenting it to the person who was the object of respectful attention. The offering the hair to be cut, was an acknowledgement of sovereignty, and an acceptance of the offer was considered as an assurance of adoption. The cerf, or bondsman, was distinguished by the shortness of his hair; and the insolvent debtor, on the resigning himself to the future service of his creditor, presented the potent scissars, whose instant sharpness was applied to his flowing locks, the marks of that freedom he no longer possessed.

Long hair being at this period the distinguishing proof of a gentleman, and, of course, an object of great care and attention, became a subject for pulpit-sarcasm; and religious oratory did not fail to make the churches echo with the crime of *toilette*-assiduity. At length, however, some of the younger clergy, sighing after the appearance of fashionable life, ventured upon the reigning mode, and gave a new *ton* to clerical *Coeffure*, which was soon adopted by a long train of their complying brethren. This schism in dress caused the

ecclesiasticks to turn the tide of invective from the lay-world to each other, and produced a division in the church, which drew forth, through no small period, the retaliating menaces of damnation from the *long-haired* and *short-haired* clergy. *Saint Paul*, it seems, who by the perversions of his successors, has been the innocent cause of much uneasiness in the world, was held forth as having, by apostolick authority, forbidden his own sex to suffer their hair to fall below the shoulder, and granted the luxuriant tresses to flow only as a covering for female charms. There seems to be some taste as well as wontonness in the regulation; but, as I do not possess, among my many hereditary talents, the qualification to become a commentator on the sacred writings, or the champion of an injured apostle, I shall take leave of the subject, and proceed to another stumbling-block of offence, and angry source of controversy, which the human chin has so amply afforded.

The respect which has been shown to the *beard*, in all parts of the civilized, and in some parts of the uncivilized world, is well known to the slightest erudition; nay, a certain prejudice in its favour still exists, even in the countries where the razor has long been

omnipotent. This impression seems to arise very naturally from the habit of associating with it those ideas of Experience and wisdom, of which it is the emblem. It cannot wait upon the follies of youth; its bushy and descending honours are not known to grace the countenance of early life: and though it may be said, in some degree, to grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength, it continues to flourish in our decline, and attains its most honourable form and beauty, when the knees tremble, the voice grows shrill, and the pate is bare.

When the bold and almost blasphemous pencil of the enthusiastick painter has aimed at representing the Creator of the world upon the canvass, a flowing beard has ever been one of the characteristick and essential marks of the Supreme Divinity. The pagan *Jupiter* and the graver inhabitants of *Olympus* would not be known without this majestick ornament. Philosophy, till our smock-faced days, has considered it as the appropriate symbol of its profession. *Judaick* superstition, *Egyptian* wisdom, *Attick* elegance, and *Roman* virtue, have been its fond protectors. To make it an object of dissention, and alternately to consider it as a sign of orthodoxy or the standard

of heresy, was reserved for the fantastical zeal of the Christian church.

In more modern times, not only provincial and national, but general councils have been convened, synods have been summoned, ecclesiastical congregations and cloistered chapters of every denomination have been assembled, to consider, at different periods, the character of this venerable growth of the human visage. Infinite disputes have been, of course, engendered, sometimes with respect to its form, at other times in regard to its existence. Religion interested itself, in one age, in contending for that pointed form to which nature conducts it: at a succeeding period, anathemas have been denounced against those who refused to give it a rounder shape; and to these, other denunciations have followed, which changed it to the square or scollop.—But, while religious caprice, (for religion, sorry am I to say it, seems to be troubled with caprices,) quarelled about form and shape, the disputes were confined within the pale of the western church; but, when the beard lessened into whiskers, and the scythe of ecclesiastical discipline threatened to mow down every hair from off the face, the east sounded the alarm, and the churches of *Asia* and *Africa*

took up the cause, and supported, with all the violence of argument and remonstrance, those honours of the chin that they still preserve, and to which the existing inhabitants of those climates offer up a perpetual incense.

In the history of the *Gallick* church, (for, by some unaccountable accident, I have sometimes stumbled upon a page of ecclesiastical story,) the scenes of religious comedy still live in description.—For example—a bearded bishop appears at the door of a cathedral in all the pomp of prelacy, and demands installation to the diocese to which he is appointed. He is there met by a troop of beardless canons, and refused admittance, unless he will employ the golden scissars they present to him, to cut that flowing ornament from his face, which they would think disgrace to their own, as well as to the religion they profess. This same history, also, is not barren of examples, where the sturdy prelate has turned indignant from the disgraceful proposal, and sought the enforcing aid of sovereign power, which has not always been able, without much difficulty, to compel the reluctant chapter to acknowledge a bearded diocesan. Others, unwilling to risk or delay the power and wealth of an episcopal throne for the sake

of a cumbrous bush of hair, have, by the ready sacrifice of their beards, been installed amid acclamations and hosannas, as disgraceful as they were undeserved. It may appear still more ridiculous, but it is no less true, that some of these bishops have compounded the matter with their refractory clergy, in giving up the greater part of the beard, but retaining the growth of the upper lip in the form of whiskers. The idea of a bishop *en moustaches* must trouble the spirit of a modern Christian; but such there have been, who, in the act of sacrificing to the God of Peace, have exhibited the fierce, terrifick aspect of a German pioneer.

At length, the persecuted beard, which has been the object of such faithful veneration, finds in our quarter of the globe, if we except the corner of *European* Turkey, its only asylum in the capuchin cloister; unless we add the casual protection which is given to it by the fanatical Jew, or mendicant hermit.

The *wig*, *peruke*, or *periwig*, with the clerical tonsure, have been the cause of as much ecclesiastical contention, as the Arian and Athanasian schisms. The last century experienced all its fury, which would not have given way to less important events, than the

edict of *Nantz*, and the questions of *Jansenius*. The former turned bigotry to a more engaging object, and lost common-sense in astonishment; while the latter opened a new vent in the combustious volcano of religious discord.

The first wig which is mentioned in history was the hairy skin of a goat, which the daughter of Saul is related to have employed to save the life of her husband. In a succeeding age, *Zenophon* makes mention of the periwig of *Astyages*, the grandfather of *Cyrus*; and describes the astonishment which seized the royal boy, on beholding his ancestor so majestically covered. *Suidas* and *Tacitus* both bear testimony, that *Hannibal* of *Carthage* wore a peruke, and that his wardrobe was furnished with a very large assortment of wigs of all kinds, fashions, and colours, not only for the purpose of magnificence, but also from the policy which frequently obliged him to change his appearance.

The *Romans*, and in particular the fashionable ladies of *Rome*, had great recourse to false hair. That of a white colour was the *ton* in *Ovid's* days; and it was imported from *Germany* where it was common.

Nunc tibi captivos mittet Germania crines;
Culta triumphatæ munere gentis eris.

This courtly, gallant poet is very severe upon the custom; *Martial* has made it the subject of several epigrams; and *Juvenal* charges *Messalina* with wearing the adscititious ornament of her head to obtain concealment in the pursuit of her debaucheries. The ladies of the present day may, therefore, shelter themselves behind the greater extravagance of the female Romans. The latter imported their borrowed locks from a foreign country, while the former are contented with the spoils of Death in their own, and do not shudder at mingling, with their own tresses, such as are furnished by the fatal hand of disease in hospitals and infirmaries.

Louis the thirteenth of France, having lost his hair, was obliged to ask, or, as he was king, I should rather say, command, the comfortable aid of a periwig; and the necessity of the sovereign cut off all the hair of his fashionable subjects. *Louis the fourteenth* annexed great dignity to his peruke, which he increased to an enormous size, and made a lion's mane the object of its similitude. That monarch, who daily studied the part of a king, was never seen with his head uncovered but by the barber who shaved him. It was not his practice to exchange his wig for a night-cap, till he

was enclosed by his curtains, when a page received the former from his hand, and delivered it to him in the morning before he undrew them. The figure of the great *Bourbon* must, at times, have been truly ridiculous. But of ridiculous figures———had I lived in the reign of good *Queen Anne*, my thread-paper form and baby-face must have been adorned with a full-bottom periwig, as large as that which bedecks the head and shoulders of Mr. Justice *Blackstone*, when he scowls at the unhappy culprit who is arraigned before him.

It is, I believe, very generally known, that there is no small number of the Clergy who love a little of the *ton*, as well as the ungodly lay-men: the question, therefore, of wearing wigs, with the form of ecclesiastical tonsure, became a matter of bitter controversy; and the first *petit-maître* of a clergyman, who was bold enough to appear in a wig, was called *le patriarche des Ecclesiastiques emperruques*. At this time was published the famous book in favour of *periwigs*, with the admirable title of *Absalom*, whose melancholy fate was caused by his hair; and I remember, in the humourous exhibition of sign-painters, with which I think *Bonnel Thornton* amused the town some years ago, that he adopted this idea, in a represent-

ation of the Jewish prince suspended in mid-air, as related in holy writ, which was entitled *A Sign for Peruke-makers*. *Tom Warton*, of Oxford, wrote a little Latin *jeu d'esprit* on the subject of wigs, with their applications and effects, of which it concerns me to remember no more than that it possessed his usual Latinity and classical humour. *Hogarth* also employed his pencil to ridicule the full-bottoms, especially the *Aldermanick* ones of the last coronation, with his accustomed success. But of the histories that relate to this subject, the most extraordinary, and which will be hardly credited by posterity, is the petition delivered by the peruke-makers of London to his present majesty, praying him, for the benefit of their trade, to resume the wig he had been pleased to lay aside: and (what adds to the ridicule, as well as the impudence of the measure) I have been informed, by a spectator of their procession, that a considerable number of them actually wore their hair, though they openly avowed the sacrilegious wish to pluck that ornament from the pate of sovereignty.

In the Augustan age of the Roman empire, the wit and the satirist have employed their different weapons against the prevailing attentions to the decorations of the hair; and *Sen-*

eca, in one of his epistles, writes with solemn indignation, against the Roman toilettes, which he describes in the precise form and process of our own. Some of the fathers were equally severe against the female coquettes of their time; as their denunciations seem to be more particularly levelled at the fairer part of the creation. One of them, in particular, declares, that they who employ their hours in arranging their hair, instead of performing the duty of Christians, sacrifice to *Cotys*, who is the goddess of Impurity, and to *Priapus*, who is the god of it. If this be true, what a more than pagan age is renewed among us!

But, to conclude my unsuspected learning on this subject, I must add the curious reproach of *Tertullian* against the *high headdresses*, as well as the practice of *dying the hair*, so prevalent in his day. He concludes his earnest address, on this subject, to the ladies, by impressing on their attention the sacred text, that we cannot make an *hair white or black, or cause the least addition to our stature;* and reproaches them on employing the above-mentioned arts of the toilette to effect both these purposes, and thereby giving an express lie to the divine declaration of the gospel.

Petit-Maitreism (excuse a new-fangled word) has existed at all periods, in all countries, and in every situation. Private peace has been disturbed by it; and the spirit of Christianity has been lost in its contentions. It found its way into the cloister; it has accompanied the hermit in his cell; and the Hottentot does not escape its influence: nay, the patriot *Roman* and the hardy *Goth* have condescended to become coxcombs. *Theodorick*, a well known Gothick prince, is related to have had an officer, who, when the barber had finished his beard, was employed to pluck every remaining hair from his face which might interrupt its smoothness. *Cæsar* used to say, that his soldiers fought better when they were perfumed; and, according to *Plutarch*, *Surena*, general of the Parthians, and the bravest man of the nation, painted his face. The French do not suffer the most refined effeminacy of their toilettes to extinguish their gallant spirit, and, at the command of their sovereign, they rush from all the silken softness of luxury, to the hardships of camps, and the dangers of battle.

Whether you will be of opinion with me, that man is a *Petit-Maitre* by nature, or, to express myself more philosophically, a coxcomical animal, I cannot tell; but I have, in

the course of these reflections, wrought myself so fully into the belief of it, that, under the future operations of my friseur, I shall look in the glass before me with the complacent patience of a man, conscious that he is acting under the common impulse which governs all mankind.

Adieu!

MEMOIR

CONCERNING THE LATE

LORD LYTTLETON.

OF all the men who have been distinguished by any thing great, worthy, or remarkable, or who have left any thing behind them which will transmit their *names* to posterity, no one, perhaps, is so little known, or has left us so few memorials of his life, as the subject of this brief memoir. Neither has there lived, in modern times, any other man of eminence, concerning whom such a circumstance would be so little regretted. None but the historian who is uselessly and frivolously inquisitive, or the author who should be constrained to publish his biography, would regret it all.

But the means of developing the mysteries, which hang over his history, and the materials for writing his life cannot be found on this side the Atlantick: and, that it has not already been written in that country, where alone it could be faithfully done, is evidence that it cannot yet be done, without either disagreeably affecting some relatives or friends,* imposing upon the reader, or injuring the publick. For it would seem, that such a life as he led would afford but few incidents calculated to excite *general* interest, excepting what he has himself related in his *Letters;* and we are confident that any thing like a *biography* of so young and so profligate a Lord ought not to be laid before the publick. His character is best drawn by himself, and will be sufficiently known and understood by those who read his Letters and his Speeches in parliament. But, as all persons have a kind

* On publishing his Letters, the names of the persons to whom they were addressed were omitted by particular request, as appears by the Introduction. Some Letters, also, which alluded to certain transactions of his life, were wholly omitted.

of literary curiosity to learn something concerning the origin, the situation, the family and connexions, and the publick career of any one, whose deeds or whose writings have extorted admiration or yielded entertainment and instruction—this short sketch of young Lyttleton's life shall embrace some of these objects.

The late Thomas, Lord Lyttleton, was the only son of the worthy and illustrious George, Lord Lyttleton, who descended from one of the ancient and most respectable families in England. His ancestors had possessions in Worcestershire, particularly at South-Lyttleton (from which place some antiquaries derive the name,) as long ago as in the reign of Henry III. The learned Mr. Selden had in his possession two grants of land, to which one John de Lyttleton was witness in 1160. The great Judge Lyttleton, in the reign of Henry IV, was one of this family; and from him descended Sir Thomas Lyttleton, father of George, Lord Lyttleton, and grandfather of Lord Lyttleton, the Younger.

George, Lord Lyttleton, (for distinction's sake sometimes denominated the Elder,) was born in 1708, educated at Eton, and removed to Christ's Church, Oxford; after which he made the tour of Europe, obtained a seat in parliament, distinguished himself as a speaker in the opposition, was appointed secretary to the Prince of Wales, and on the death of his father (1761) succeeded to the title of Baronet. In 1744 he was appointed one of the lords commissioners of the treasury—in 1754 he was made cofferer to his majesty's household and privy-counsellor—and in 1757 he was created a peer of Great-Britain. He rendered his name celebrated, as an author, by his Persian Letters, the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul, Dialogues of the Dead, the History of Henry the Second, and by several other ingenious performances, among which are some fine and delicate specimens of poetry. He was connected, on the side of his mother, with the family of the late Lord Cobham. In 1742 he married Lucy, daughter of Hugh Fortescue, Esq. of Filleigh, in the county of Devon, a most amiable lady,* the sister of Lord Fortescue. By her he had one son (the subject of this memoir) and two daughters—one of whom married Lord Viscount Valentia, and the other the Earl of Anglesey.

* Her husband has drawn her excellent character, in his *Monody* on her death, which happened in the beginning of 1746—Vide Poetical Epitome—and in his Inscription on her Monument—Vide his life in Amer. Enclycopædia, British Plutarch, &c. &c.

This only son, Thomas, was born in 1744, or the latter part of 1743, and was educated at Eton. Where his education was finished—for that he received a liberal and finished one, his speeches and letters, as well as other records, evince—we do not know: but from his letters it appears, that he was sent on the tour of Europe "to complete the sensible plan," as he terms it, which was to be followed by his marriage. As he does not think proper to disclose "what happened during his travels," except by hinting at it incidentally, it is presumed to have been in no wise *creditable* to himself or family. And yet it seems that only because he had gotten into parliament and made a bold and flowery speech, his offended family (which had, we believe, but lately *discarded* him,) received him "with a degree of warmth, delight, and triumph, which the brightest virtue could alone have deserved." Such was the miserable management the fond father and family applied to an only and darling son of the most extraordinary promise. But on this subject we refer the reader to the 9th and 11th Letters in this volume:—there parents will find a most solemn premonition.

That such promising talents should partially blind the eyes of affection is less to be wondered at, than regretted; but, that the wise, the pious, the polished Lyttleton, should suffer so hopeful a candidate for his titles and character, through profligacy, to disappoint the political, and to disgust the moral world, can never be sufficiently deplored. The brilliancy of his wit, the sprightliness of his fancy, the native force of his intellect, the strength of his memory, the extent of his knowledge, and the facility with which he wrote and conversed in the most elegant language, very naturally excited high expectations among his numerous acquaintance and friends—as the following EPISTLE, from the Hon. *Constantine John Phipps, Esq.* addressed to him, while in his juvenile years, will attest.

Sprung, Lyttleton, from noble British blood,
My friendship's honour, and life's greatest good!
This courts the rabble with obsequious nod,
Or, the mob's idol, deems himself a god:
That of th' unruly courser seeks a name,
And risks his neck, to gain a jockey's fame:
Another tills with joy his father's land,
Or prunes the curling vine with skilful hand:
Some love the tented field, the drum, the fife,
The din of arms, the battle's bloody strife:
Me, other cares, in other climes engage,
To seek experience from the battle's rage;
Where fleets meet fleets in deepest conflict joined,
Where mimick thunders mock the impelling wind.

But, *born in greater character to shine,*
And add *new lustre* to a noble line,
Be thine the greater part in *deep debate,*
With steady counsels to uphold the state.
So thy great sire, skilled in each publick art,
By virtue rules, by precept guides the heart.
If his commands submissive you receive,
Immortal and unblamed your name shall live.
O! may his labour gain an happy end,
Make thee a patriot good, and constant friend!
May heav'n show'r down its choicest blessings still,
A Cato's virtue, and a Tully's skill.
May'st thou the first of Britain's Senate shine,
And be thy father's name surpassed by thine!

How lamentable, that "Manhood did not keep the promise of Youth"! Yet in manhood, with all his dissipation and mispending of time, he rose far above mediocrity, both as a politician and a writer. And, however incorrect he might be in his opinion respecting the issue of the war with the American colonies, his political principles were just and well founded; nor is it by any means improbable, that, if the measures he advised had been pursued, the event would have been as he predicted. And besides—a man's intentions can never be considered altogether censurable, nor his predictions weak or erroneous, when he is obliged to make up his opinion (if he have any of his own) on men and things that are not under his observation, and are known only by second-hand information or conjecture. But where the objects of his remarks and predictions lay before him, he was correct, even to prophecy—witness his observations on the character and abilities of Mr. Wyndham.

As a man and an author his judgment was sound and penetrating; his knowledge of the manners, character, and principles of men extensive; and his distinctions nicely drawn and plainly defined. His wit sparkles without dazzling, his sentiments enliven without inflaming, his knowledge instructs without dictating, his independence of spirit elevates without over-awing, and his suavity interests without flattering. As an orator (a title he was thought to have deservedly acquired in both houses of parliament,) he was, except perhaps in some few instances, bold, graceful, and commanding, rather than serviceable and efficient. As a statesman his powers were rather to be *dreaded* in the opposition, than *valued* on the side of the ministry. His oratory was luminous, rhetorical, and pure—some specimens of which will be found in "*Chapman's* SELECT SPEECHES, Forensick and Parliamentary," now in the press at Philadelphia.

In reviewing a speech of Mr. Burke's, in favour of conciliation with America, March 22, 1775, the *London Reviewers* took up one of Lord Lyttleton's also, delivered May 17, 1775, against the repeal of the Canada bill, and gave the latter the preference. They observe that Lord L's is as "spirited, pointed, and concise, as Mr. B.'s is studied, elaborate, and diffuse;" and add, that "Lord L. distinguished himself in a manner by no means unworthy his promising abilities." But we will quote a few passages—

After remarking that his exordium, different from Mr. Burke's, was pertinent, and without affectation, the *Reviewers* select the following from his speech:

"At the conclusion of this long and laborious session of parliament, when the unhappy divisions subsisting between England and America seemed, by the joint wisdom of both houses, to converge towards conciliation, I am greatly surprised that the noble and learned Lord* should come forth again to scatter abroad the seeds of dissention, and, not content with that resistance to the legislature, and to the law of England, which prevails over all British America, should now endeavour to involve the Canadians in the common revolt; establishing as a leading principle, by which your Lordships may be induced to repeal this bill, that those for whose emolument it was made are the most dissatisfied with it—that they groan under the pressure, and consider it as a most intolerable grievance—PAINTING their dislike to it with the strongest colours of rhetorick, and, by these groundless insinuations, wishing to deprive them of all those beneficial advantages they most gratefully acknowledge to have received by the equitable system of jurisprudence obtained from the parliament of England.

"My Lords, however bright may be the eloquence, and however dark the purpose, of that noble and learned Lord, I trust he will fail in his attempt; and though strong was the arm that directed this shaft against the vitals of the constitution, though the point was envenomed, and, though it was aimed at a mortal part, I trust, my Lords, it will fall blunted to the ground, without endangering the safety of the commonwealth, or affecting the true interests of the kingdom."

Having stated, that Lord C. had declared this bill to be repugnant to the constitution &c. he says he will remind his Lordship, that

* Lord Camden.

this bill was not framed for England, but for a conquered province, and agreeable to stipulations made and ratified between the country which conquered and the one which has lost said province: he adds, "And then, my Lords, I will go a step further; I will meet the noble Lord on his own ground; and I will uphold to his Lordship, that the general principles and policy of this Canada bill were founded in wisdom—that the principles of it, which his Lordship affirms to be repugnant to Christianity, emanated from the gospel, and are coeval with the religion of our Saviour; that they breathe forth the spirit of their divine master; for they are neither principles of popery nor servitude—they are principles, my Lords, of toleration, unrestrained by prejudice, and unfettered by absurd and odious restrictions. The inhabitants of Canada were catholicks before they were conquered by England; they are catholicks now, but under the jurisdiction of a protestant parliament, and under the cognizance of protestant bishops, who form a part of that parliament, and who, I believe, were unanimous in allowing them the free exercise of their religion,"

Having produced some arguments in favour of his opinions, &c. he turns the battery of his rhetorick against Lord C. charges him with conduct less becoming himself than a factious burgher of Geneva, and proceeds:—

"But we have seen enough of republican government—enough of that levelling principle, which pulls down every thing, and sets up nothing—of that furious, ungovernable spirit, which rises against all order and subordination; which militates against all power which it cannot invade, and would destroy all government which it does not possess. My Lords, the constitution of England abhors all despotism: it equally abhors the despotism of one man, and the tyranny of the uncounted multitude! The medium between both is what it delights in:—It delights in freedom, guarded and governed by law under the controul and protection of the three powers of the state, king, lords, and commons, in parliament assembled. But this happy and most envied state, with which God has blessed us, does not flatter the ambitious purposes of the noble and learned Lord: he has therefore employed all his talents, and all his learning, to conjure up a noxious spirit, both in England and America; a spirit which assumes the fair form of liberty, that it may more surely destroy legal and constitutional freedom."

To this spirit his Lordship attributes the rise of the discontents in America, and censures those who excited it as highly culpable,

rather than the Americans. This spirit, he says, has roused the colonists to opposition, by telling them "their *lives* and *properties*, their *all* was at stake—that the affair of the ship-money, in the time of Charles I. was a trifle light as air to the afflictive despotism, under the lash of which they groaned," &c. &c. He adds—

"This was the language held forth within THESE walls, and from THESE walls re-echoed to America. It was HERE, my Lords, HERE that these opinions were broached: and can you wonder at the effect they have produced? Can you wonder that, urged on by men of such exceeding weight, the colonists should have taken the alarm; or that it should have spread, like a pestiferous disease, from the mountains of New-York down to the Gulph of Mexico? To WHOM then are you to ascribe these disorders? At WHOSE door then are these calamities to be laid, which have shaken the peace of the kingdom? To the misled, to the infatuated Americans? or to the perfidious counsellors, whose atrocious policy has involved them and us in common destruction? Is it credible, my Lords, that so long as the great interpreters of the law in this house, men of superiour talents, and deeply versed in the science of the constitution, proclaim aloud that their fellow-subjects on the other side of the Atlantick are cramped and fettered in slavery—is it credible that they should submit to any government, or ever think themselves in a state of freedom?"

He was active in parliament till his death; and the subjoined remarks respecting that event advert to his speeches delivered the last day of his life—this we have no reason to doubt, as we find in the journals of the House of Lords, that two days before his death, he, together with the Marquis of Rockingham, Lord Coventry, and others, opposed Lord Chesterfield's motion for an address of thanks.

Of his Lordship's peculiar habits, temper, and disposition, we have but little other knowledge than what is to be derived from his Letters and the writings of those acquainted with him. We believe he sometimes amused himself, like his father, in writing poetry—mostly gallant and complimentary, we presume: and in the London *Critical Review*, for 1780, we find some notice taken of "*Poems, by a young Nobleman*," which are attributed to his Lordship. Judging, however, from the specimens there quoted, we should not think very favourably of them, nor believe them to be his. In her *Memoirs*, Mrs. Robinson, after observing that his Lordship one day presented her the works of Miss Aikin (since Mrs. Barbauld,) says,

"Lord Lyttleton had some taste for poetical compositions, and wrote verses with considerable facility."

Mrs. Robinson, who had sufficient opportunity to know something of Lyttleton's conduct and standing in the world, makes several severe but contradictory observations on his Lordship. He and Captain Ayscough were, at the same time, presented to her by Lord Northington; and Lord Lyttleton afterwards introduced to her, among other friends, some theatrical characters, Sir Francis Molineux, Alderman Sayer, and the unfortunate George Robert Fitzgerald. Of all these, she says, Lord Lyttleton was most decidedly her abhorrence—that he led her husband from the paths of domestick confidence to houses of profligate debasement—that he was uniformly her aversion—his manners were overbearingly insolent, his language licentious, his person slovenly to a degree that was disgusting, &c. This does not well accord with a preceding remark, that he "was the most accomplished libertine that any age or country has produced"—that "he was an adept in the artifices of fashionable intrigue"—and, afterwards, that his "*society had marked Mr. Robinson as a man of universal gallantry*". We may, therefore, conclude that she overstrained the discription of his manners, dress, &c. through resentment at his continued raillery towards her, as he used frequently to call her *the pretty child*; whereas Mr. Fitzgerald was very attentive to women, took great concern in her welfare, and became her ardent *admirer!* No doubt, she preferred Mr. F. and hated, perhaps misrepresented, Lord L.

Mrs. R. also mentions "his shameless conduct to an amiable wife from whom he was separated:" but when he was married we do not know; neither to whom, except that he himself calls her Mrs. P—— in his 34th letter. Mrs. R. also charges him with "cruel neglect of a lady by the name of Dawson, who had long been attached to him." This is doubtless the "amiable and handsome lady," spoken of in letter 11th, as being "cold as an anchorite."

Many vague, and probably fictitious, stories have been spread abroad, to make his life and death appear wonderful and miraculous. The editor of the *Lounger's Common-Place Book* (London, 1796,) thinks that many of his excesses were founded in that kind of bravado only, which revelling and vanity produce; and he is persuaded, that many reports about him originated with one of his infamous associates. He says, also, it is reported of Lyttleton, that at 12 years of age, he declared with an oath, that he would not only be a *libertine*,

but a *libertine destroyed*—that he had a front which no blush ever disconcerted (but there ought to be *one* exception to this assertion, according to letter 29th)—that he believed in the earthly visitation of apparitions, ghosts, &c.—that he would frequently ring his bell with violence at midnight, for his servants, who generally found him sitting up in a cold sweat, with every symptom of dismay and terrour—and that he would oblige one or more of his servants to sit up with him for the night, on account of these visitations of a guilty conscience, or a disordered imagination, which was produced, or at least exaggerated, by intoxication and revelry. Such a man, in despair of a lost heaven and the horrours of an approaching hell, may be said to "meet the ghosts of his departed days, a numerous train, who frown like furies."

After all his Lordship's ill conduct, we cannot but think, that most of his misbehaviour is chargeable to the indulgence of his family, and (to use his own words) not to "obdurate and inflexible dispositions inherent in his character." We cannot discover in his whole career any rooted malice towards mankind, any propensity to rebellion, murder, publick or private frauds, or swindling—but the very reverse. Nor do we discover any other motive in his propensity to licentiousness and profligacy, than the indulgence of inordinate appetite, or a desire to appear as wild and unrestrained in thought, word, and deed, as his young and prodigal companions. Inwardly, and with himself, he was no libertine, no advocate for deistical or immoral principles, but deprecated such characters, paid secret homage to opposite qualities, and deeply lamented his want of them in practice. We refer the reader, among other letters, to the 3d, 5th, 7th, 9th, 15th, 24th, 29th, 42d, 47th, 49th, 51st, & 53d. What a lesson to inculcate strict family-government, an attention to the choice of a young man's associates, and to teach the fallacy of leaving a child to himself because he has nothing *really wicked* in his disposition!

All our remarks have been founded on the supposition of these Letters' being genuine—which seems to have been a matter in dispute. The editors of the *Critical Review*, after speaking highly in favour of the Letters, suggested the possibility of their being the work of some other hand: and when the 2d volume appeared, an advertisement is said to have been inserted in the news-papers by Lord Lyttleton's executors, declaring them spurious; the truth of which advertisement was never controverted by the publisher. The editor of the *Lounger's Common-Place Book*, also, says, they are the production of Mr. Combe, the ingenious author of the Diaboliad; and that they are

exactly such as Lord L. *would* have written. The editor of the *Port Folio* says, still "he is very incredulous" of all this. The Letters, says he, "are certainly strong resemblances of his speeches and conversation."

We owed it to candour to cite these passages, though we have no doubts respecting the *authenticity* of the Letters; and although all this could never affect the excellence of the production, and on *that* account is of no importance at all, yet the whole business of the before-mentioned advertisement looks very much like a *concerted plan* between the *publisher* and the *executors*, *after the fact*, as the law would term it. Almost innumerable reasons might, nay we should say *must*, have operated among Lord L's remaining friends, acquaintance, and correspondents, to have them declared *spurious*, for a time, if not always—since they *had* gotten abroad, and most probably without the consent or knowledge of many persons concerned or implicated. And there is in themselves evidence of their genuineness; as Mr. Combe would hardly have been able to relate all the things, in them related, and with such exactness too, unless assisted by his Lordship, his papers, or some of his family—all which is wholly improbable.

Concerning the manner of his death, various stories have been told, and told no doubt without foundation. In the *Lounger's Com. P. Book*, it is stated, that he hastened his death by over-heating himself in running or walking for a wager—and, that for *several days* before his end he declared that an invisible hand had drawn open his bed-curtains, and presented to his sight a fluttering dove. The first we think a mistake; and as to the last, it is sufficient to know, that all the last days of his life and much of his evenings (even to a *few hours before his death*) were spent in *parliament*, or among his gay companions.

From the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, for December, 1779, we, therefore, extract the following, as the most rational, candid, and authentick *Account*, which has yet been published, concerning this event.

"ANECDOTES AND REMARKS RESPECTING THE SUDDEN DEATH OF THE LATE LORD LYTTLETON.

THE very extraordinary circumstances that preceded the dissolution of the young, the gay, the dissipated Lord Lyttleton, when they first appeared in print, soon after his death, were generally considered as the productions of some enthusiastick brain, ever ready to construe all striking impressions on the minds of men, who have

led a life of vice or folly, into extraordinary interpositions of Providence to promote the reformation of the hardened sinner; and to alarm a volatile, unthinking, giddy race of people, who, following the tide of luxury and sensuality, are easily seduced into a denial of the existence of a superintending Providence, or, if not so far advanced on the road of infidelity, at least forget that there is a God. Considered in this point of view, it is no wonder, in an age like this, when philosophy, instead of being the handmaid to truth, is the prostituted mistress of atheism and impiety, that every report concerning the previous warning, given to his lordship in a dream, of his approaching end, was received by the publick as an idle tale, and made the standing jest of all the polite assemblies in town.

At length, however, the following anecdote, so well attested that not a shadow of doubt remains of its authenticity, has given birth to a variety of speculative opinions on the nature of that impression on his lordship's mind, which, from the time of his communicating his dream to within an hour of his death, certainly was too strong to be subdued either by the strength of a fine natural genius, the force of reason improved by a liberal education, or the surrounding pleasures which affluence and elevated rank can always command, when their aid is wanting to dispel the gloom of melancholy reflections.

Having given the fact, as it now stands confirmed by the evidence of persons of character, we shall submit to our readers some free thoughts upon the subject, and shall esteem it as a favour if our correspondents will take up this interesting theme, and communicate their opinions, illustrated by any similar anecdotes within the compass of their own knowledge.

On Thursday morning, the 25th of November last, his lordship mentioned at breakfast to Mrs. Flood (a widow lady who lived with him as companion to the Miss Amphletts, his nieces,) that he had passed a very restless night; that he thought he had heard a fluttering noise in the room; and that immediately after he fancied he saw a beautiful lady, dressed in white, with a bird on her hand, who desired he would settle his affairs, for that he had but a short time to live. On his enquiring how long, the vision answered, "*Not three days.*" His lordship mentioned this dream frequently, but with an affected air of careless indifference, which only showed that it had made a stronger impression on his mind, than he chose to acknowledge. On Saturday evening he pulled out his watch, observed that it was half past ten, and that he had still an hour and an half longer to live, and jocosely chucking under the chin one of the young ladies (his

nieces) danced about the room, and asked her if she did not think he should get over it, and live beyond the time predicted for his death. Soon afterwards, however, he went to bed, complained of an uneasiness in his stomach, and while his servant was mixing a cup of rhubarb and pepper-mint-water, a medicine which he frequently took, expired. It was remarkable, likewise, that his lordship endeavoured to account for his having dreamed of the bird, by saying that a few days before, being in his green-house, at Pitt place, with Mrs. D——, he had taken some pains to catch a robin, which had been shut in, and which he had set at liberty.

The methodists and the quakers look upon the dream in this case, together with its effect on his lordship's mind and the accomplishment of the prediction, as one of those singular manifestations of his power over men, which God is pleased to make from time to time, in order to strike conviction home to the hearts of infidels and voluptuaries. Proper subjects, say they, are likewise chosen for these supernatural exertions of Providence; persons whose exalted station in life, universal acquaintance, and known dissipation make the example more awful and alarming to a gay world. Sermons have been already preached to enforce this doctrine on the strength of this recent instance, and the celebrated female speaker, Mrs. K——, is expected to deliver an excellent oration to the brethren and sisterhood in Grace-church-street, upon this subject, wherein she will take occasion to demonstrate the divine intercourse between the Supreme Being and the spirit of man, from which will be deduced the favourite doctrine of the operations of the spirit, the chief tenet of the quakers.

Others, who are inclined to think seriously upon the subject, but at the same time cannot subscribe to the opinion that there is any thing miraculous in the circumstance of the dream, or of his lordship's subsequent death, account for the whole from physical causes. They maintain, that his lordship having been in a bad state of health for nine months past, and labouring under an inward complaint which weakened his nerves, it is no wonder that he was subject to restless nights and uneasy dreams. His general complaint was a pain in his stomach, and his usual medicine, a dose of rhubarb in mint-water. His real disorder was a *polypus* on the heart, described to be a quantity of coagulated blood, contained in a *cyst* or bag, on the bursting of which, immediate death, the natural consequence, ensued.

Let us now reason candidly upon all these circumstances: is it not well known that frequent return of pains in the stomach bring on

great dejection of mind, or what is called low spirits? It is natural to suppose, that the gayest man upon earth, in such a situation, will turn his thoughts upon the past disagreeable events of his life, and that if any *crime*, of which he is conscious, occurs to his recollection, it will serve only to increase the melancholy frame of his mind; the generous design of making retribution, the impossibility of doing this, in some cases, reflections upon death, which break in upon every valetudinarian (whatever may be his religious opinions,) all contribute to stir up the war within. Thus distempered in mind and body, accustomed to palliative relief, the voluptuary, upon the first interval of pain, repairs to the banquet, and indulges to excess. Repletion causes a return of the disorder, perhaps in a lesser degree, permiting exhausted nature to seek for recruiting strength from that universal restorative, balmy sleep; but this relief being interrupted by indigestion, perturbating dreams are the consequence—dreadful struggles, between the active spirit, imagination, mind, or whatever you are pleased to call it, and the encumbered body, prevail—more horrid to sensation than words can describe: few there are, young or old, who have not laboured under these horrours, vulgarly called the *night-mare*, after eating hearty suppers. What are the subjects that distract the man in these dreadful conflicts? Are they not familiar occurrences of his life? The horseman is flung from his seat, dashed on the pavement, the blood gushes from every vein, the struggle to recover awakens the terrified dreamer: he doubts for a few minutes whether the scene was not real, and dreads to close his eyes again, lest the imaginary vision should return. Another is attacked by a favourite dog or cat, and seems to feel the teeth or talons of these furious animals. In short, not to dwell upon the variety of shapes which this midnight disorder assumes, let us only add, that the seducer of women will in his turn be visited by the imaginary appearance of the injured female: the agitated mind and the diseased body may work this up, in one of these nocturnal phrenzies, into confused combinations of occurrences. Mrs. D——, representing the green-house occurrence, and the bird, the confined fluttering robin—with these might be intermixed (for the person in these dreams often changes in the instant, sometimes we fancy it one, and then another,) some other female form, unhappily ruined, which assails the dreamer, and intimates what is most likely to strike the seducer with terrour, at his speedy dissolution. Awakened at this scene of terrour, the idea of some fixed time easily intrudes itself on the disturbed imagination, and leaves a last-

ing impression; just the same, and no more than that which has urged a man to give a premium for a particular lottery-ticket which he has dreamed of so perfect as to remember the number, and that it was drawn a capital prize.

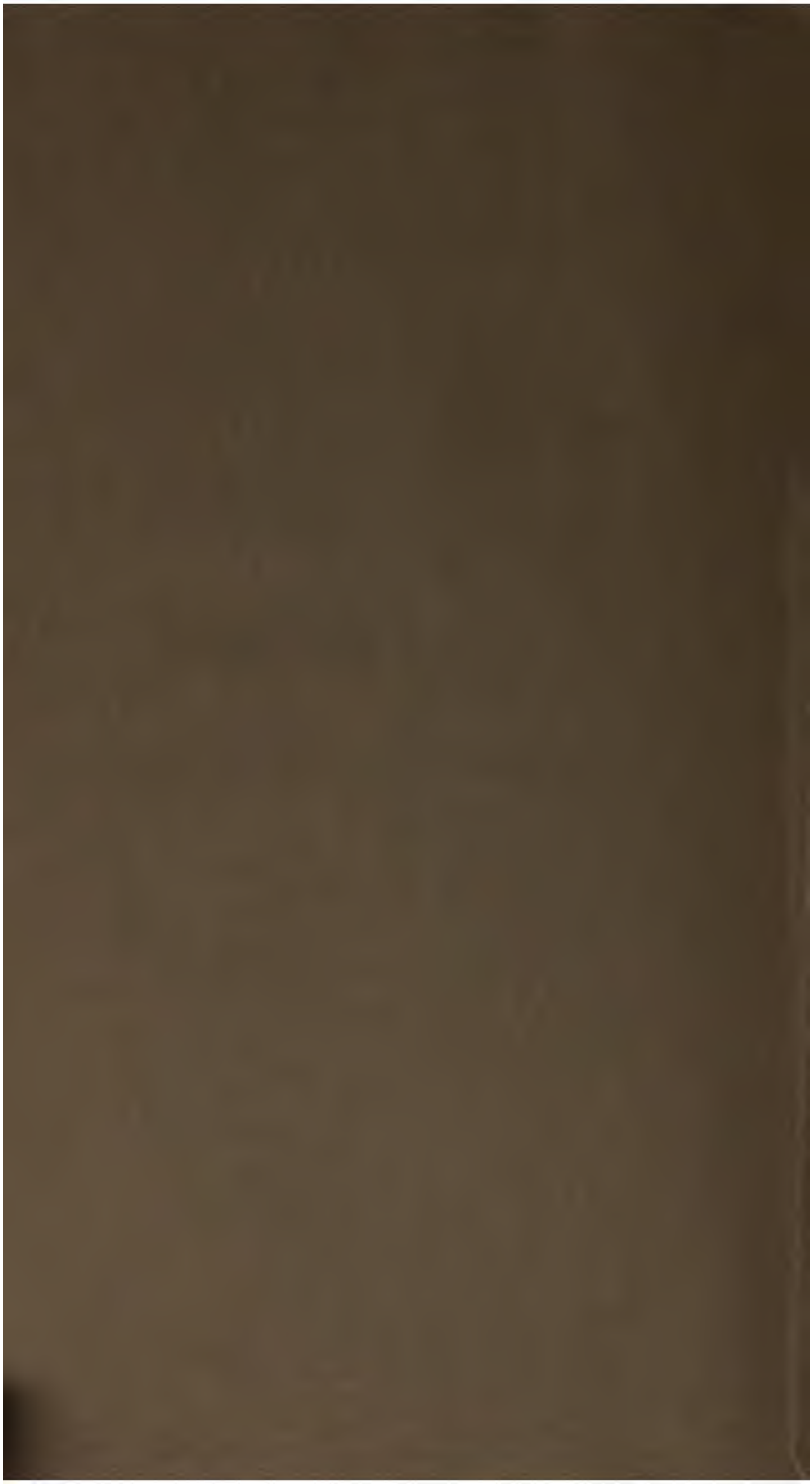
The very evening after the dream, Lord Lyttleton in his weak state exerted himself in two speeches in the House of Lords, and returned home quite exhausted: what other fatiguing voluntary exertions he imposed upon himself the next day we know not; but it is a fact, that he ate a very hearty supper on the Saturday evening, that the impression upon his mind of his approaching death still affected him, that in this situation the pain in his stomach returned, too violent to permit him to take his usual medicine, or to go off in a confused dream. The pressure of the burthened stomach bore too heavy on the *polypus*, and the discharge killed him almost instantaneously.

We see nothing supernatural in all this, and could we possibly admit that the Supreme Being occasionally steps out of the line of the ordinary operations of his providence in the regular course of nature, we should suppose it would be to furnish more general examples of his omnipotence and mercy, which must inevitably have an effect on whole bodies of people; on the conduct of nations; and produce general, not particular changes.

Montezuma and his subjects, by such an interposition, would have avoided those horrid cruelties under which they slowly expired, when the Christian Spaniards conquered Mexico: or the innocent victims of a bloody inquisition would have been saved, while the pretended holy inquisitors had been destroyed by fire from heaven. But as we have no right to expect miracles of this nature, it is miserable superstition to believe that they exist for less important purposes.

Finally, let it be remembered that men of apparently vigorous constitutions and sound judgments have been killed by the force of imagination; and in Lord Lyttleton's case, if imagination had any force, disease of body co-operated at the same time to hasten his dissolution."

Lord Lyttleton, the Elder, died in July, 1773, on which event young Lyttleton succeeded him in his titles and estate. The death of the Younger Lyttleton happened, as mentioned above, Nov. 27, 1779, when he was about 35 years of age--with him his titles became extinct. A more appropriate epitaph could not, perhaps, be inscribed on his tomb, than this by the editor of the Port Folio—

"IN GENIUS AND VICE A PARAGON."

June, 1807.